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J. JOHNSON
OR
"The Unknown Man"



THOS. H. B. WALKER



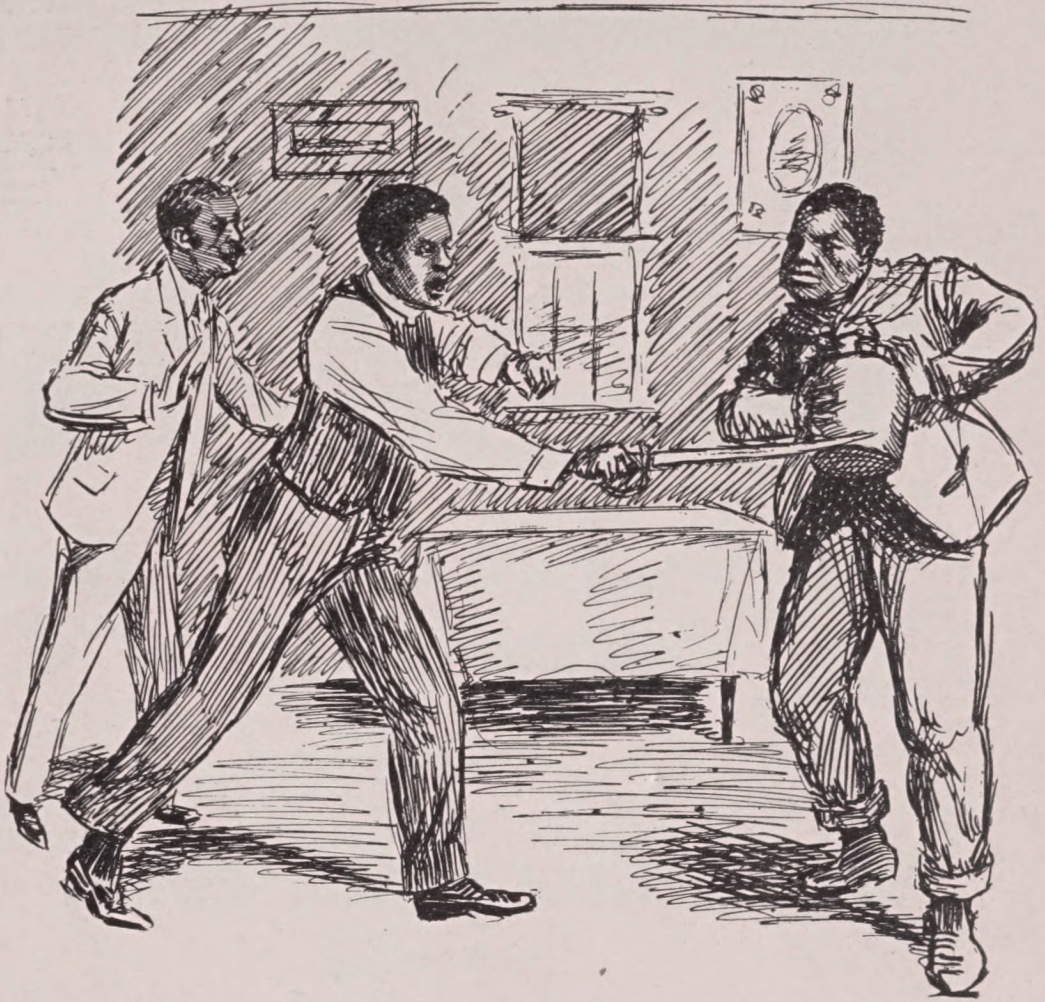
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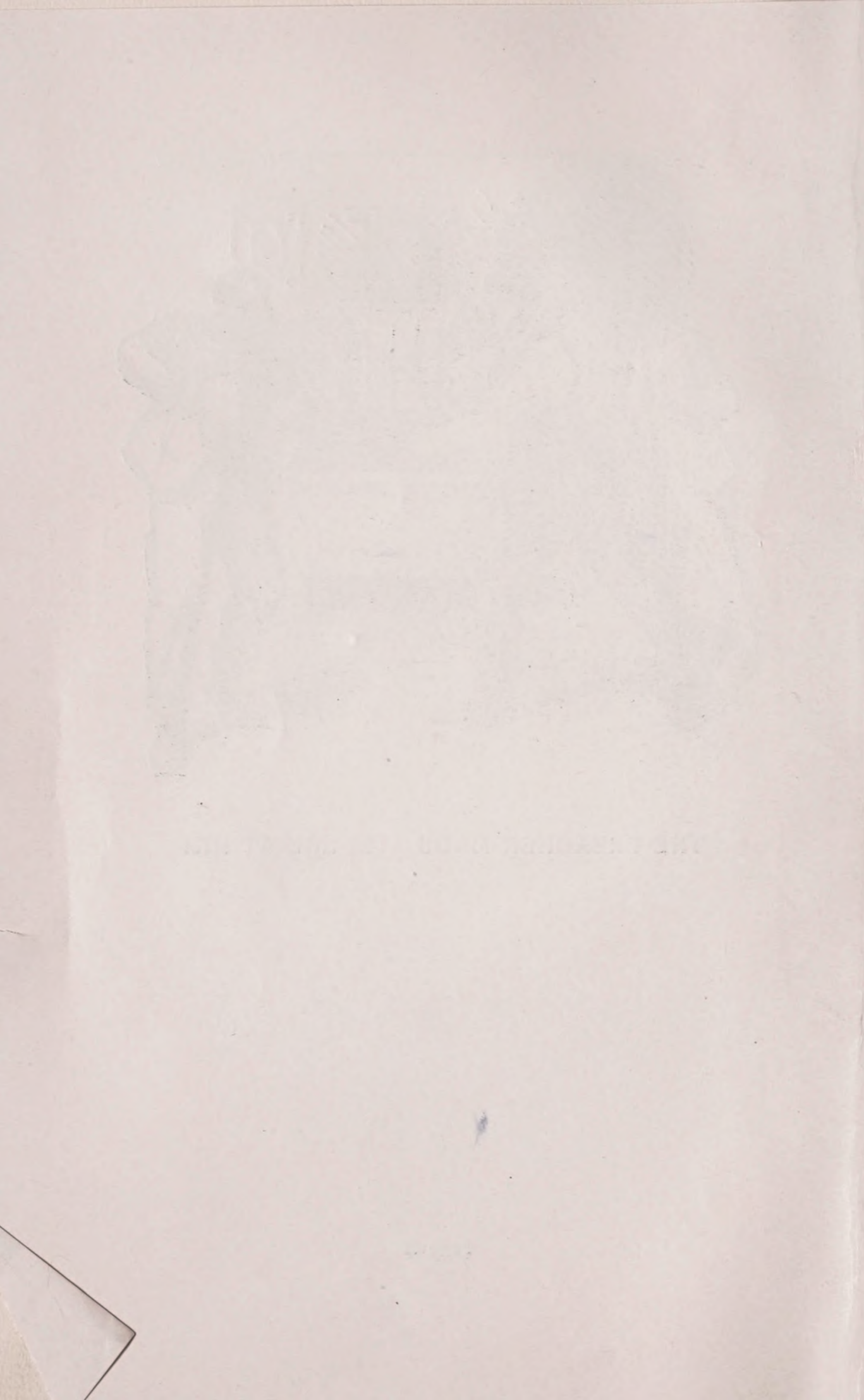
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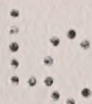
THE PREACHER MADE A LUNGE AT HIM



J. JOHNSON
OR
“The Unknown Man”

AN ANSWER TO MR. THOS. DIXON'S
“SINS OF THE FATHERS.”

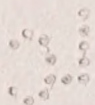
BY
THOS. H. ^{Hamilton} B. WALKER,
Author of
The Presidents of Liberia,
Bebbly, Gnostic, The Man Without
Blemish, Etc.



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No. 1

To

*The every lover of truth, law, and order,
Do I dedicate this work.*

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CHAPTER I.

THE DISCOVERY.

No home, no father, no mother or even sister or brother, was the lot of little Jim. And legally speaking, in the eyes of the law, we might add that he had no name.

It was a sad day in the life of this boy, when first the rays of sunlight streaked his brow and the music of nature beat upon his ear. Who were his parents no one knew.

When upon the tide of time he was first seen floating, like the great Law Giver, in a basket was he, but not so fortunate as the Law Giver, to be among the flowers of the sea; a cheap five-cent basket discarded and worn, with rags tucked around, held the little flower bud that was lying at the door of an excuse of a house, that was inhabited by one of the poorest families of the town. We say family, but not a family, it was but the remnant, a June pear swinging tenaciously to the limb of the tree, when the fruit was all plucked, and the October frost and whistling wind of

autumn had said to the leaves, "Earth to earth and ashes to ashes." It was all that was left of a very happy but humble family.

A lone widow, poor and feeble. An old woman, left in the world without a relative. Aunt Jane was her name. At her door one winter morning, while the ground was wrapped in a sheet of frost this wee babe was found.

Her dark eyes rolled, and her wiry form stood erect, she laughed, "Ha! Ha! Bless the Lord! Child! I wonder whose baby is you? Ise sho gwine ter have trouble here." By this time she had him up, in her bosom, fondling, shaking and continuing to talk to him: "Where you came from sich er day like this? Little rascal ain't crying er bit! Your people sure must be crazy or want er fling you in a coffin to put you here a day like this."

A little bed was speedily arranged in a rocking chair, and in this improvised nest our little friend found what hereafter was to be his home. An interesting picture they presented around this fireside, compared with what it was a few minutes before.

Days and weeks rolled by, and neighbor after neighbor came to see Aunt Jane and her new visitor; all of them, more or less, were equally filled with advice, but for the mush and milk that made up the little one's diet, the merciful God only knew the hardships and struggles of Aunt Jane to secure it.

After a year passed and the wee baby had struggled from the cradle, and was creeping about the house, showing a little ivory decoration, cute dimpled cheeks and fat dimpled hands, cooing and twittering like a sparrow; Aunt Jane came in, seized the little one up into her arms, gave him the usual kiss just as she had a hundred times, looked into his eyes that showed the African and Anglo-Saxon mixture, and said, "Boy, Ise gwine ter sho name you today. Ise dunno how old you is, but you is been here a little over a year, so Ise bound ter name you today."

While Aunt Jane was talking to the child some one came up and struck the steps with a stick as though they would split them, and said, "Hey! Hey! Who lives here?"

Aunt Jane replied, "You hush dat noise, Jonah, come in ef you gwin ter."

Uncle Jonah answered, "Oh, hush yer fool-in', 'oman, don' git scared, Ise jest thought to pester yo' a little. How is dat child gitting along. You ain't hearn nothin' yet 'bout his 'cestry?"

"No; not a word," said Aunt Jane.

"Well Janie," said Uncle Jonah, "What you gwine ter do wid him?"

"Do wid him?" said Aunt Jane, "Why to-day Ise gwinter name him. I thought I'd call him Spurgeon or Beecher, and den one time I wanted to name him Garfield, but now—"

"Oh Janie," said Uncle Jonah, "You think dat boy will be President? An you know dat niggers can't even vote; why dey is just 'franchising the negro eber whar."

To this dialogue the baby paid no attention, he simply feasted on the music of the words and seemed to have been greatly delighted to pull Uncle Jonah's gray mustache or poke his finger into the old man's mouth.

Uncle Jonah, like Aunt Jane, had watched the pickaninny grow; and while the baby could

not talk yet, he could with his little eyes watch them; the old folks argued, debated and loved; the baby cooed, cried and loved, thus in process of time the three were bound together.

Uncle Jonah continued: "Tell you, Janie, de way de Negro is lynched an' pestered sorter 'pears to me dey is agin him eber whar, yes! eber whar! You think 'cause he's kinder yaller, das hope for him? Bet you needn't think dat; yaller niggers are hated as bad as any of dem. Dey say dey aint got no nation."

"Wy," said Aunt Jane, "I knows he ain't gwine ter be no President, but I thought he mout un be 'lowed to vote 'outen any one pesterin' 'im."

"Yas," said Uncle Jonah, "Dat ar Grandpa Clause in de Con'tution keeps us fom it."

"Grand-daddy claws, what make dat dey don't cut him off"? asked Aunt Jane with a deal of confidence and assurance in her very accent.

"More'n dat," she continued, "Who knows but what dis boy's Granddaddy, both of um, come in dat dar—what yo call it?"

"Oh! no!" said Uncle Jonah, "You kin see

the nigger in him, fer if he is only got one drap of blood of my race, the whole blessed thing becomes nigger."

"Any way," said Aunt Jane, "Ise gwine ter name him, Ise gwine ter call him Jim Johnson, atter the great book writer."

Aunt Jane had heard of Ben Jonson, the great scholar and writer of England, and her husband, who was now dead, was also named Jim; therefore, she had this name deeply rooted in her heart. She called him Jim.

In this name she perpetuated racial love and predicted scholarship. Perhaps the boy might someday be a great scholar, and then her soul's crave to see the name of her family placed among the great men of the earth would be realized. For, in the heart of every son of Adam, there is a something that is called by some, an instinct; by others, an affinity; and yet by the great Philosophers it is an unknown attribute, that throws men together and repels them.

Aunt Jane was a good Christian, intensely religious as most colored folks are; yet she had a feeling to love her own; of course this love

was not necessarily confined to her own people exclusively, as we have seen, in the case of this child, that no one could kiss a Bible on, as being of Negro blood; yet, like Moses, like any people, when it came to hair-splitting love, the racial love was bound to predominate, although many have often said that the Negro possessed no such love.

Now, here was a child, a bright child, an Octoroon; may be a white child, but somehow she believed it to be of her race. If it had been an Indian of the forest, a Chinese from Hong Kong, or a Saxon of the purest blood, it would have made no difference with Aunt Jane; for in spite of all his opposition, in spite of all his shortcomings, in spite of all his faults and sins, the Negro is a Good Samaritan; he is hospitable; he will help the needy; yea, he will feed even the slayer of his brother and those who revile, maltreat and abuse him.

CHAPTER II.

"SWEEP THE BOY'S GAME."

"Kill him!" "Head him off, Sam; I got him once on the knoggin!" "No you didn't, old Spaniard, not that time!" were noises heard from half a dozen throats that filled the air. A crowd of boys were chasing a little bushy-headed boy of about eight or nine years; his face was dirty, and like the other boys, easily could he have passed for white, no one would have thought him other if it had not been that one of the boys said: "Never mind, you nigger!" As the boy escaped his pursuers and entered a hut an old woman pulled him in and closed the door.

She said, "Jim, what's the matter, my boy? What's those boys chasing you 'bout? I dunno what I'm gwine ter do wid yo; one of des days Ise mighty 'fraid you'll git hurt. You know you ought ter stay 'way fom dose white folks."

"Well, Ma Jane," said Jim, "We boys were just shooting marbles and getting on fine until one big boy came along and shouted 'sweeps,'

and I happened to get more of them than the other boys, then they started to fighting. We boys play together all the time, us boys, we do, and we never fight. Of course I won't go to give my marbles away. I don't like sweep stakes, but if they are going to play the game, every man for himself."

"Yes, son," said Aunt Jane, "You donno; you stay by yourself and be a good boy if you want to go to Heaven, where you can meet your ma and pa."

"But, Ma," said Jim, "You are the only ma I have, and if I get to Heaven how will I know my mamma? Oh, no, I ain't got no ma but you, and if I go to Heaven she won't know me, either."

"Come, son, and git your dinner, I knows you is hungry, fer you is sure got a bright head, eber body says it. Your Uncle Jonah was er telling me 'bout it tuther day," said Aunt Jane.

The boy wouldn't be shut off so soon, especially when he seemed to have the best of the argument, so he continued: "You know, Ma, the other day I was standing by the road and a big automobile passed me; and all at

once my hair stood straight, my skin grew tight, and I don't know how I felt. It looks like that every time that machine and those people pass me, I have that same feeling."

Aunt Jane couldn't answer the boy, but simply groaned, and before she knew it a tear was stealing down her sainted old cheek.

When the boy had ended his supper, he and Aunt Jane were seated before the fire, and whiled away the time until the hour arrived for bed. Aunt Jane was busy with the needle, and the boy busy with his books and toys.

The little scrummage among the boys that very often took place, and many times was magnified by the papers, as a race war, very soon was forgotten.

Day after day passed and years rolled by, the tender youth became the hope and inspiration of the old Saint, and the old Saint was the succor and hope of the child. The one's life became entwined within the other. It was barely possible to cut one without affecting the other; like Mille-Christine, the twins that were held together by one body. One mouth said to the other: "When you die, how long will I live?" "Nay, I can't live, I will die also."

CHAPTER III.

TWO OLD SAINTS.

"Janie, say what you will or may, but there is something strange about that boy. It has now been twelve years since he was picked up, and yet you know nothing."

"Yes, Jonah," said Aunt Jane, "It is strange, but I have hearn of a heap uv folks in dis ole wurl picked up, yit dey seem to stay here an git along like de tuthers. Dey ain't gotten but one mouth, and it kinder git somkin to eat. Why, take dat man, Fred Douglass; he couldn't tell who his daddy was, I don't believe. Didn't he live, died, and all de wurl had to tip dey hats to him. Nobody 'sputes dat."

"Well, what you gwinter do wid Booker Washington; he named hisself. I am not er arguing 'bout his daddy, and ain't he sma't? Why, bless your soul, he is the biggest man you ever seed. Ain't no white people kin beat him in dat 'dustrial education."

"But Jane," said Uncle Jonah, "Have you ever think 'bout dat boy?"

"Yes," said Aunt Jane. "I know one thing he has sho brought good luck to dis house, and the good Master protects me as never before. He sho' opens de window of Heaven."

Uncle Jonah said, "I don't mean dat; bet dat boy was picked up, as a naked bird thrown from its nest! Janie, I am an old grey haired man, stung by the frost of seventy-five December morns, but I says again—dar am somethin' 'bout dat boy 'spicious. When I was a boy I saw a featherless bird; yea, a naked little bird, you got me? Fall fom its nest dat wuz hidden in de bough and secured fom the winds and dews of Heaven. I saw it fall, and as it fell, hitting limb after limb, bush after bush, screaming, chirping, aye, gurgling. Oh! it was dying. The blood was creeping fom its legs—its wings seemed broken, and its back looked like a beef. Janie, you ought to have hearn its screams. It would have made a hangman cry and a demon weep. Did the mother leave it? No! She floundered beneath it; she fluttered about it, and when I went dat I mought take it outen de sand, the ole bird fought me; she picked me; she left me not 'till

I had nested the leetle one back, safe into its hiding."

"Well," said Aunt Jane, "What 'bout it?"

"Why, 'oman," said Uncle Jonah, "We are mortal, and how kin a mother lay its little one out, on a frosty morning, to weep, to cry, to suffer; yea! to die? If dere be a God who shall judge the wurld, Janie, do you believe such an one as dat shall ever see his face in peace? Jane, shall not the Jedge of all the earth do right? De Good Book sez—"

"Ah! Jonah," said Aunt Jane.

Then for about ten minutes they were both lost in thought and not either said a word. The two old sainted philosophers were trying to solve a problem that had baffled sociologists and humanitarians and scholars from the days that Cyrus was found, down to the present. Yet unsolved it remained.

Kingdoms and Empires rose and fell; years roll by; nations, like men, grow old and die; history changes; science advances, but this problem ever remains. Here is a boy who will soon bud into the beautiful life of manhood; who will stand upon the college plat-

form and deliver the Valedictory of his class, enter the world and, like other fellow students, speak of his Alma Mater. But who knows the yearnings of his heart? Who knows the dreams that come to him in the night times, as upon his bed he rests his weary head, and in his sleep climbs the golden stairs? No mother knew he, that had ever kissed his lips or father said "my son." There he was, a lone pine, born in the ocean expanse of sandy desert, and although scorching sand and burning winds swept on into one eternal day; yet it remained. Where did it come from? How did it get there? No one seemed to know. Not indigenous to the clime, yet it lived; when there was no oasis to shade and water its roots, it caught the dews of Heaven, it dropped its own leaves and made a shade.

Uncle Jonah ended his visit and returned home. The days rolled by as usual.

The boy fast sprouted into a large youth while the dame rumor nodded but never slept.

Kind friends made it possible for Aunt Jane to find work. And evenings on Jim's return from school he washed, ironed, gathered wood

and did whatever his hands found to do. The people admired him and the community often buzzed with gossip that: "We don't know whether he is white or colored, but he certainly is thrifty." A few other children would sometimes join him in his work. And at school allow him to share their lunch. Prominently among these was a little dark girl called Susie Smith. Susie's father was dead, and so she and her widowed mother lived alone together. Yet her mother was young and proud and possessed a neat home and had a few thousand dollars in the bank from which she could draw whenever the income from her poultry farm and garden failed to cover the weekly expenditure. Susie and Jim were the star pupils of the little town and often contested for the place at the head in the spelling row. Jim was Susie's senior by two years, but they were both in the same grade.

CHAPTER IV.

PLATTING THE MAY POLE.

One day in May when the school met for the final close, six boys and girls were selected to plait the pole. Three beautiful girls and three fine robust boys. One of the boys seemed to be the favorite of all. The girls called him Jimmie; the boys called him Jim. The day before that, he had led the class in arithmetic and saved the day in spelling. Problem after problem the town folks and wise old farmers threw at the scholars but never failed Jim to work every one. Sometimes jokers, sometimes catch problems, but seriously, quickly, and manly, worked he every one. An example like this one time tripped the whole school. "If two trains were traveling the same day in opposite directions, one starting three hours ahead of the other and had gone 120 miles, traveling at the rate of 40 miles an hour and the other was making 70 miles, where would they meet on the road, and how far would each one have traveled? Jim worked it

and not only won a smile from Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah, but likewise won the heartfelt thanks of the teacher, for no teacher likes to see his school fail.

Uncle Jonah gave one: "Suppose a man had twenty sick sheep and one died, how many would be left?"

Many of the children said, "Why, 25; for one from 26 always leaves 25." But he couldn't catch Jim, he politely said that 19 would be left.

Now the word and book battle was over and the gods of the feast had to be fed. Every person attending had a basket. Chicken, little shoats, cakes, pies, and gingerbread formed the bill of fare.

The crowning event before the feast was to plait the May Pole, and the speeches and dialogues came next with the crowning of the May Queen and King as the last event before the meal. Little Susan Smith was the queen and our friend Jim was the king. The scholars making the highest marks were selected. Hence the pupils leading the school in the general averages were Susie and Jim.

And to these no greater joy could have come than to be king and queen.

When dinner began, Uncle Jonah threw the crowd into convulsions of laughter as he looked at Aunt Jane and winked and said: "Janie, you 'member foe de war when we plait a pole; you wuz queen and I wuz king and old Jim got so mad. I thought I mought have been king right on, but Janie always liked big men, so Jim won de day, and here I is, wid my fuss shoes standing right on de carpet."

The Professor broke in, "Uncle Jonah, you have sorter given her up now, haven't you?"

"Oh no, sir!" said Uncle Jonah. "Never too late for a raccoon to wear a pleated bosom shirt."

CHAPTER V.

WHO UNCLE JONAH WAS.

By the glowing fire coals one night, near a fire hearth, sat little Jim and Aunt Jane. They were talking as usual; the boy, like all boys, since Cain stood questioning Adam, down to the present, was right there seeking information and sometimes his question were hard to answer.

"Ma," said Jim, "How long have you known Uncle Jonah?"

"Oh, 'bouten sixty-odd years, I think, if Ise not mistaken," said Aunt Jane.

"Why, Ma, that was before the war," said Jim.

Aunt Jane: "Yes, my son, when the war broke out in 1861, Uncle Jonah was a full-grown man. He isn't old as I is, but he was grown. He was one of the men who was carried from South Ca'lina wid de men who went to Kansas to fight de free soilers. He was de cook.

"Free soilers," said Jim, "What do you mean by free soilers?"

"Wy," said Aunt Jane, "A free soiler wuz a man who believes eber body dat lives is free born, and outen dar, dey want to make dat country free jist like de North. Well, a lot of dem wanted to keep it in slavery, so de people from Alabama and Ca'lina sent soldiers dar to keep 'em slave. As I wuz telling you, Jonah was carried dar as cook, but dere wuz a man out dere, a mighty good man named John; well, you know de Bible talk about a man named John. Dis one wuz called John Brown."

"Oh yes, Ma," said Jim, "I know about him. We sing about him in school, you know." And Jim sang, and the old Saint hummed also:

*They hung John Brown to a sour apple tree,
They hung John Brown to a sour apple tree,
They hung John Brown to a sour apple tree,
But his soul is marching on.*

CHORUS:

*Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His soul is marching on.*

"Ma, he was the best man I ever read about, if it had not been for him we all would have been slaves today."

"Well," said Aunt Jane, "As I was telling you, dis man wuz sent from God to free the cullud folks, and de soldiers went dar to stop him and make dat country slave. Jonah, I says, wuz cook, but Jonah wuz ha'dly over de long ribber 'fo he brake loose and 'scape fer freedom."

Jim interrupted: "They couldn't catch him?"

Aunt Jane: "Yes, son; dey tried, but Jonah could outrun a rabbit. De patrols run 'im wid hounds, but Jonah got in a lake and laughed, 'ha! ha!' atter dem." Aunt Jane laughed and continued:

"You ought to seed ole Jonah grab de dog an souse him under de water an de dog got out er yelping and he drowned one. An' you know, Jonah wuz a reg'lar die dapper; he jist git right under de water and crawl like he wuz 'pon land; den he 'scape to John Brown an' stay wid him. Wherever John Brown go, Jonah go."

"Well, Ma," Jim said, "I read where they hung John Brown about something he did at Harper's Ferry."

"Yes; dey did," said Aunt Jane, "But dey didn't hang Jonah, you know. John Brown, Jonah, and a heap of um, went dar and take de guns and powder an put in, gwinter free we cullud folks. But dey wuz pow'ful weak to fight so many, an' some gotten away and some wuz 'rested. John Brown, who had some uv his boys killed already, sez: 'I ain't gwine to run no whar; God will fight a righteous cause.' Well, Jonah run, as you see, my son, Brown is in Heaven, and Jonah is right here."

"Ma," said Jim, "Uncle Jonah certainly knows something!"

"Yes," said Aunt Jane, "Jonah certainly is lucky; he must be born wid a cod on his eyes or ca'y graveyard dirt one, fer he shore is lucky. You know, son, dat man came fom Afreka. Such a man lak dat aint born in 'Merika. You see him so, all des white folks and cullud folks say he is the truthfulest and 'ligidest man you ever seed. An' boy, people now days ain't born like dat."

"Well, ma," said Jim, "Uncle Jonah must have seen Lincoln."

"Yes, boy;" said Aunt Jane, "Ise hearn him speak 'bout Lincumb time an' 'gin. Jonah sez he neber seed a man so ligidist looking in all his life. He sez one day he went wid John Brown to see Lincumb 'bout freeing cullud folks. Lincumb thought it de thing ter do, but 'nother man, Lincumb's friends," ha! ha! laughed Aunt Jane, "sez, 'if you free de niggers dey will all starve in a year.' Lincumb, you know, wuz a tall bony man, an' as sharp as er blessed needle, he draws hissself up, pops his fingers and sez, 'I guess we do like er man in Illinois; he plant er tator patch and had er lot of hogs, but him wuz too lazy to dig de tatoes; so he goes an' turns de hogs on de tatoes. A man comes along and 'lowed, Friend, don't you know when de winter comes, de ground will froze and de hogs can't root no 'tatoes? Well, sez he to de other man, he will hab to root hog or die.'"

"Oh, boy! you wants to git 'formation 'bout de war, you ought to hear Jonah talk 'bout it.

He is a regular 'pedia. He ain't got no book larning, but he sho' is edecated."

When the platting of the May Pole became a thing of history and a few more summers rolled by, a sad incident crept into the life of Aunt Jane. She had never before, from the first day that little Jim was placed at her door, considered a time of parting.

These two friends, who for many years had cheered each other around the fireside, Jim and Aunt Jane, must part. Aunt Jane, by close saving, had laid aside a few pennies that proved sufficient to put Jim for a year or two in a far-off university. The old Saint knew not one school from another, but a kind teacher, when Jim had finished his academic course, advised him about two schools, Nashville and Boston. Jim preferred Nashville, but the teacher, Boston. Jim also reasoned that while Nashville was planted in the South and the summer hung around almost the whole year, Boston for refinement was almost a college in itself and to mingle among its people was like placing two years work into one.

Jim went off to school and his progress

was what all his friends predicted. Aunt Jane soon became accustomed to being alone and Susie and Uncle Jonah appeared to feel the sting of his absence almost as much as his foster mother.

A new doctor came to Bowser, and the old town that never had anything to liven it, but public gossip, except sometimes a funeral or marriage or when a wandering minstrel or circus visited its cross ways, moved on in the even tenor of its ways.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE STATION.

One warm day in June, when all nature was contriving to make old Bowser a duplicate of Eden, as the bees hummed, the honeysuckles waved, the peaches looked red on the trees, the blackberries waved their hands on every hill top and from every fence corner, the violets bloomed in every dale and fragrance filled the air; three people, while the dew yet stood on the roses and like diamonds sparkled from the eaves of the houses, stood at the station to meet the early train.

One was a feeble old woman, bent by the weight of ninety-odd years, wiry form, grey haired, sharp voiced, tenaciously holding on to life. Some hope, like a spark, moved in her breast and kept life burning, for you know we only die when there is nothing to live for. She hoped, she prayed, she worked, therefore she lived.

The other was a young woman in the bloom of life, a girl of but twenty summers, a blush-

ing, rosy-cheeked, curling-lipped, ivory-teethed young woman. I would say a rose of the spring just unfurling its leaves to send out sweetness to conjure the humming birds and draw the bees. But you would say my description is far-fetched. Dressed plainly and simply, head erect and upon throwing it back she looked like a queen. She was there; there like the others watching and waiting with a spark in her breast that glowed through her beautiful dark eyes, whenever a certain name was mentioned.

Then we must not forget the third person; you know him well—the old sage from the dark continent who had been crushed by the demon slavery, but when they looked for him to be mashed and destroyed, he came forth a shining coal; he was ground in the mill of hardship, but instead of being destroyed, came forth as a diamond that sparkled in the sunlight of a new era. There he was, grey headed but yet youthful; he was a man who laughed at hardships and through impediments marched on to victory. When he was down and you thought hope had mouldered

away into ashes, he had but one answer, "It's never too late for a raccoon to wear a pleated bosom shirt."

You know the three. Who could they be? None other than Aunt Jane, Susan Smith and Uncle Jonah.

The train arrived and a rapid stepping, curly headed, athletic young fellow with sachel in hand, football under arm, leaped from the car. The four sunshines met and melted into one. The words of none we record save those of Uncle Jonah: "Boy, we shore is glad to see you; Janie been cooking all day yesterday for you. She's got a powerful lot of good things fer you. I dunno who's been studying most 'bout you, Susan or Janie. I sorter git jealous one time, case Ise ur right here standing on the carpet yit, and nobody ever study 'bout me."

"Uncle Jonah," said Jim, "You know it took a seven days' march around Jericho before it fell; but suppose they had stopped on the fifth day or the sixth or even six and a half?"

"Janie! Susan! You heard dat? Dat boy talks like a preacher, but he's hit de nail right

on de head. Dar is a young gal roun' here I courted 'fore de war, an' fuss thing you know she gwinter fall my way. Boy, Ise see de raccoon a putting on the pleated bosom shirt."

A few hours passed and the four souls were sitting around the table in the little old cabin where twenty years before a wee babe had been picked up from the step one cold winter morning.

Jim drew up and pushed back his hair, the other three gazed out the window as a big automobile with its curtains down making twenty miles an hour rolled by.

CHAPTER VII.

ENEMIES AT THE TOP.—THE PLATFORM MEETING.

The rushing crowd that thronged the Calvary Church that Sabbath at Bowser town was far greater than what it was for many a day. A few leading white people occupied rear seats on one side, and colored people crowded everywhere until every available space was taken, even the altar, and around the platform was used as seats. Among those who filed in were the preacher and doctor. They pushed through the crowd looking right and left, gazing at the audience and finally found their seats on the platform. The preacher seemed a bit stung and winced; the doctor was in harmony with him, and said: "Yes, people always make a deal of fuss over nothing."

"Yes," said the preacher, "They have gathered here to hear that boy, as though he was some great something. I'm glad of one thing, I have to introduce him. I think I can scratch a little of the peeling off the rind."

"Oh, watch your friend a little, too," said the physician. "I am coming behind him and the pill I will give will prove a physic that will stir the molecular system."

The preacher was one of those misfits in nature who possessed an over charge of enthusiasm that he sometimes mistook for the working of the spirit. He was a pretty good parrot, who rattled off Spurgeon, Wesley and Talmage's sermons *verbatim et literatim*, and did it with so much ease that he very often deceived the ignorant and made the simple believe that he was a great scholar. One time he gathered the fragments of many old Christmas plays together, gave a concert and dubbed himself as the author. He wrote not a jot of the music nor line of the poetry. Yet he underscored the play with his signature and told the folks that he wrote the Cantata; he was a base liar and a man that possessed hatred for anybody that was his superior. Such people are found all through life, but it looks as though the largest number is found in the pulpit.

The doctor was not so prejudiced, yet his

profession, as he thought, possessed certain qualities that lifted him so far above the rabble, as he dubbed humanity, that there were courtesies belonging to him, quite different from the other sons of Adam. He and the preacher were associated, hence one had a bad case of the malady called egotism and the other had contracted the disease from him. As the minister took his seat at the side of the doctor, he remarked: "I see that the great lord of the town ain't here yet."

"No," said the doctor.

"Guess he will be escorting Miss Susie out, the belle of the town, as she and all the other girls are so crazy about him," said the preacher.

"I guess so," said the doctor. "Or some other belle. I tell you I haven't much faith in these football and baseball dandies."

"Neither have I," answered the preacher, "But it looks like all the world is gone wild over them."

While the preacher and doctor were whispering, a rustle went through the whole house and the congregation, like one man, gave an

applause that vibrated the walls and shook the ceiling. The giant had appeared, the people's favorite was entering the door; it was Jim, Aunt Jane was leaning on his arm, Uncle Jonah, with stick in hand, was hobbling on behind. Jim looked solemn, but Aunt Jane, dear old woman as she was, knocking close on to a hundred, looked angelic, the grey hairs adorned her temple and her face was lit up with a smile. Uncle Jonah came grinning down the aisle and one of the devilish boys whispered to another: "It's never too late for a raccoon to wear a pleated bosom shirt."

They took their seats that were reserved on the front and Jim took a chair between the preacher and doctor. Both of them extended their hands in the most cordial manner. It was now fifteen minutes before the program was to begin, but the house was filled to an overflow. Uncle Jonah whispered to Aunt Jane and said: "Janie, I ain't seed dis house so full of people but twice 'fo dis. One time was when Fred Douglass spoke and de time when Bishop Turner preached here about Africa."

An opening of the crowd again in the aisles was made, and Miss Susie Smith passed to the platform. The preacher coughed, the doctor cleared his throat, and Jim crossed his legs. Someone in the congregation said, "She is a queen yet, but out of those three fellows on the platform side by side, and all of them reaching for her hand, it's hard to tell who will be king."

The other said, "Preachers are right hard to beat, and doctors are as proud as peacocks, and girls like that."

"Ah," said the first speaker, "If Madam Rumor has it right, women have gone wild over baseball and football players, and they tell me that she met him (referring to Jim) at the train the other day."

" 'Get you gone, Ely,' our professor used to say, 'Jim's at the bat,' " said the other.

THE PROGRAM—JIM'S SPEECH.

After a song and prayer, Miss Smith was introduced and she sang, "Does Jesus Care?" which seemed to so thrill the audience that numbers of persons wept. Great tears rolled

down the cheeks of Aunt Jane, and Uncle Jonah cleared his throat to keep from crying.

The song sank deep into the hearts of all; even the big three found water settling in the corner of their eyes. The preacher, in a sophomore style, introduced the speaker. He rattled off some old introductory speech that seemed quite bookish; no doubt something that had been used by an old learned Senator or College President, for many of the words he mouthed and others he cut in half. One fellow said: "That preacher is the most exacted man I ever saw to take pains to commit errors." When the preacher ended the bookish dope, he remembered his promise to the doctor, so he added, "Ladies and gentlemen, the gentleman I present to you was picked up at a door some twenty years ago. He does not know his mother nor his father, but you can see the Cracker in him. He has just returned from high school; next year he tells me he will graduate. We have him today as one of our speakers; I now present him to you."

Jim arose, and with all the politeness of a diplomat, and the grace of an actor, began by

saying: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I speak to you today on 'The Future of the Negro in America.'

"The Negro, as you know, was brought to this country in 1619 on the slave ship 'Jesus.' He was sold into slavery; he was placed in the toil, but to his credit let it be said, that he is the only race that has been able to look the blue-eyed Anglo-Saxon in the face and live."

The speech was moderately long and was fairly warm, but it was more on the order of the cold New England reasoning. Near the close he pushed the college veneering back and the hot blood that used to boil in the veins of C. N. Grandison and Henry W. Grady became turbulent. He said: "I can see them, the sons of all nations on the stage playing the world's drama; the Indian is there, he says his speech; yea, this child of the forest; the crowd applause; he takes his seat, then the Mongolian chin, chin, Chinese walks forth. He tells of a civilization that existed long before the Christ was rocked in the manger; a civilization that at one time lead the world and today is yet to be unraveled. He made his bow, he

took his seat; the people applauded; the fifes whistled, the drums rolled, the music sounded. The white man, the world's conqueror, appeared; his blue eyes shot fire, his bony fingers caught the wind and bound the lightning—he budded out wings, mounted the air, flew above the clouds; he walked the bottom of the sea and felt the heart of the earth. He made the desert to blossom, pitched railroads over the mighty valleys; climbed the highest mountain. When the white man ended his part, the curtains dropped; the people arose to go, but the stage manager waved his hand and said, 'Ladies and Gentlemen: Not yet, we are only changing the scenery; the show is not over, there is another act—the last act.' The music sounded, the drums rolled, the people waited and finally the actor appeared—a curly headed chocolate drop. His words were oil; his rule was great, he bridged the clouds in his splendor and held the wind in his fist; the five continents under his sway became a common fireside and all men worshiped at one altar. Angels communed with men and a man was a child a hundred years old; travel was

reduced to such a system that many could breakfast in New York and dine in London, three thousand miles away. This man ruled as no man had ever ruled, and under his reign Heaven and earth were married and the New Jerusalem was born. By the science and the inventions of his mighty schools, sickness was banished; the doctors became boot-blacks; sin was destroyed and the preachers lost their jobs and became ditch-diggers. The people, excited, leaped to their feet, shouted and screamed, but the orator continued. When he ended his speech the Indian, the Chinese, the Saxon and the African shook hands and with one voice said, 'Strife today is forever dead and the whole world is kin.' "

At the conclusion of Jim's speech for five minutes the house thundered with applause. While Jim was speaking the doctor bit his lips, the preacher turned ashy and Aunt Jane was too full of joy to weep and Uncle Jonah came near standing once or twice. The doctor was then introduced and made a strong effort to speak, but the tide of eloquence by the college student had so impressed the people that they

said one and all, "Enough for today. Let us go home and we will hear thee another day."

The doctor was very soon so impressed, therefore he took his seat with an air of disappointment on his face. Jim won for himself that day the praise of the town. Susan loved him as never before, she saw in him not the qualities of the little Jimmy that years before led the spelling bees, but rather a giant brain that used the English language to convey his meaning and that he was such a master of it that people bent forward to catch every word else perchance one might slip. No pen can express the feeling of Uncle Jonah or Aunt Jane.

That day Jim made two enemies, who became more bitter when they saw the next day the daily paper filled with a column and a half of the lecture prefaced by daring headlines setting forth the most emphatic parts.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOCTOR AND PREACHER.

The preacher ended his sermon that night a trifle earlier than usual to the delight of the congregation. Previously he spent many moments around shaking hands with the choir and others, but that night he hurried out the side door and in a very few minutes was seated by a glowing fire, watching the coals, while his thoughts battled with expectation and anticipations of the unknown road that we sometimes call the future. While he was in this daze, a rap was heard on the door. Without looking up or turning around he knew the stroke, so he shouted, "Come in, Doc," and as the doctor entered he stood to greet him.

"Well, how is it now?" asked the doctor.

"Oh!" said the preacher, "I was thinking about that molecular stir of yours."

"Oh no, fellow, I never like for one to say I have the odor of the candle, when they are smelling of the wick," answered the doctor.

"What is he?" asked the preacher.

"You think he is colored? What is he?"

"I don't know."

The preacher said: "Well I tell you that fellow did some talking. Why, he has the brain of a Goliath and his language is perfect."

"Yes; I knew that there was quite a rustle about him, but it did not once occur to me that he was an orator. Have you heard what he intends doing. Do you suppose he is contemplating preaching, entering law, or practicing?"

"I don't know. I don't think he would do much at practicing," said the physician. "He has not the airs, and trim manners of a physician. I was thinking he would make an excellent preacher. What do you think about it?"

"No, sir;" said the preacher. "He is not spiritual enough. You know that calling requires a man deeply spiritual." The doctor, thinking about his friend's gifts made no reply, but simply coughed. "Now," continued the preacher, "You know that's where most men make a mistake, they do not count the cost before entering upon the highest of all

callings. Now, you know if I had not been a man of ability, I would never have made the impression in that introduction that I did."

The Doctor coughed again. "Why, I saw a ripple sweep the whole house while I was talking and you know I told you that I would peel the rind."

"Yes," said the doctor, "But have you thought how that fellow struck back at us? He said preachers would become boot-blacks and doctors ditch diggers when the world reaches its high civilization. And did you notice how old Jonah looked? It seemed as though he was glad, then the whole house applauded."

"Yes," said the preacher, "But the Bible disagrees with him, for it says before the end of time they would become 'wicked.' "

"I thought that it was weaker," said the doctor.

"Yes, I think it says both, although my memory is a little dull," replied the preacher.

"Yes," remarked the doctor, "I guess preachers are like men of my profession; they sometimes make grave mistakes. Take the 'bug theory' of spreading disease. We used

to have an old professor who said that he did not believe a word of it, and he also believed very little in the knife. He only resorted to it as a finale."

"I didn't know," said the preacher, "That you fellows would ever admit the truth, but I guess I will have to say that you are an exception; in fact I have been watching you since the first day I arrived here two years ago. Say, what do you think about Doctor Boston? I notice crowds are always around his office and sometimes he is as drunk as a bed bug, yet they pass by good doctors and wait there until he sobers up, help to dress him; pay for a prescription and take the medicine with more confidence than they do that from the best doctors in town."

"It is not so," replied the doctor.

"But I know that it is," said the preacher. "For I have seen them hanging around by the dozen, when well dressed doctors with fine offices went for hours with nothing to do."

"Well, I deny it emphatically," said the doctor, getting angry. "The Bible says if a man tells a lie, tell him of it."

The preacher rose to his feet. "You don't mean to call me a liar in my own house?"

"That is what I said," said the doctor.

"You are the cheapest man I ever saw," remarked the preacher.

"I think not," said the doctor, "But you are deceived. You are, I repeat it," said the doctor, drawing nearer to the preacher and speaking in a lower tone. "That old drunkard; that old drug-fiend, I say that old scally-wag is the best doctor in town. I had rather take his opinion on a case than all the dandies in the city. I have seen the doctors in town; yes, white and black, hanging about him the darkest hour in the night to get an opinion. I have seen precarious cases given up by all the high-priced doctors in town; I have seen that old wreck of humanity, that drunken doctor, go in and bring them to life." The preacher could not do anything but shake his head—his speech seemed gone. When he did speak, remarked:

"I have seen the same thing in the pulpit. I remember the first church that I served, I was right from the seminary and a bit starchy."

"A bit starchy yet," said the doctor.

"And an old tramp, as I thought, came to town. He was there a week before I met him and I positively was told that he was drunk the whole time. Well, another preacher comes there and raises a denominational strife and scoops in half of my members. The old fellow, drunk as he was, comes around and offers to help me. His clothes were in rags, his hat yellow with age. I didn't know what to do, yet I certainly needed help. In the meantime I had wired my Presiding Elder to come immediately. I told my friend I would thank him much to come back to dinner, yet I was not decided as to my action in the matter of the church work. The Presiding Elder arrived before dinner and while I intended telling him about it, it slipped me, while we were getting ready for dinner. Who comes in but this old ragged preacher. I saw him first and was a little nervous at what to do, but the Elder saw him, jumped up and ran to meet him and greeted him most cordially. On returning to me he said, 'God is with us, we have the man. I thought he was dead. Have

not seen him for years, but we will make him preach tonight.' I could not quite understand it. 'Oh yes,' said the Elder, 'We are lucky, we will make him preach tonight.' When I got an opportunity, as you know me, you see that I am a straight man. I asked the Elder, 'Do you have that old fellow preach tonight?' 'Oh yes,' the Presiding Elder said. 'I will have him preach, and you rush the news around as rapidly as possible.' I could not understand even myself, but I reasoned that if the Elder said it, let it be.

"Did you let him preach and knew that he had been drinking?" asked the doctor.

"Yes," said the preacher, "And more than that, he told the Elder that he was sick and that he knew nothing that would help him so much as a pint of corn to get ready for the service. He stated that he had been taking the Keeley cure for drink habit, thought he was well; did not take a drop for three years and all at once he became crazy for it; had to have it. Had been turned out of the church several times, but, thank God, he was making a confession, and that he believed that pardon was his."

"How did he come out?" responded the doctor.

"Why, man," said the preacher, "He entered the church that night on the Presiding Elder's arm and took for his text: 'When I was a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put down childish things.'" He preached the people wild. They shouted, they screamed, they cried. I never saw a mortal man preach like that man. You know, he took every member back and a third of the other fellow's members. For one hour and a half I thought I was on the mountain of transfiguration."

"Did he make you cry?" asked the doctor.

"Yes. I think that everybody must have been crying then."

"Doctor," said the preacher, "What about that fellow Jim? You know he has these people fooled."

"Yes," said the physician, "But I know a few things now. I heard that his mother is serving a life sentence for shooting his daddy, and that when he was born they brought him to that door to lose all identity of his mother."

"Ah," said the preacher, "Were they white or colored?"

"Now that matter I haven't got just straight as yet, but soon will," remarked the doctor.

"I would give five hundred dollars," said the preacher and snapped his fingers and laughed; "Yes, I am poor, but I would give five hundred dollars to get the facts, for I know that every word of it is just like you heard it."

"I have the thread," said the doctor, changing the subject. "I love that girl, Susan, but since he has been back she has thrown me overboard."

The preacher felt his pocket for a letter that he had from her. He was a silent lover, but worked hard for the first place, and said: "If you don't get her I hope that he don't, for I think really she has a turn for a preacher's wife."

"That's it," said the doctor, "Every man for himself."

"I believe it any way," said the preacher. "With that girl as the queen of my home I would make the Bishopric."

"Yes," said the doctor, "You will make the Bishopric without her."

"I think," remarked the preacher, "That we both will have to watch that fellow Jim."

The doctor remarked, "I guess I will be going on that."

"Why not stay all night?"

"No; I must be at the office. I don't know when a call might be made."

"Don't forget to push matters," said the preacher. "I know that Susie doesn't want to marry a convict."

"No," said the doctor, "Our people are not like they used to be. They use a little common sense now about the married relation."

Thus the preacher and doctor parted with a vow to meter out vengeance upon Jim.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT JIM THOUGHT.

While the town was all arife discussing the affairs of the evening, Jim, the orator, and while the doctor and preacher were plotting as to the next move, Jim, Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah were spending the evening around a warm fire. Jim remarked several times to his mother that he thought that the preacher and doctor were such fine men. Said he, "I am glad that you have such a fine preacher. Susie thinks he is a very able man and she also tells me that the young doctor is so well thought of by the people."

"Yes," said Aunt Jane, "He is a fine preacher; cose de people seem ter think he is more uv a teacher or essay reader, but Ise er findin' no fault of him, cose I ain't gointer fight no man of God. No, and dat doctor is de best church lover dats er gwine amongst dem doctors and dey tell me he gives a right pert medicine."

"Oh," said Uncle Jonah, "Janie, you believe he can cure anybody? Ise right sort of poorly

myself sometimes, but Ise afraid to call a doctor. You see Ise er been 'round here a long time and Ise afraid if I take any powerful lot of medicine I mought crap. Ho! Ho! I ain't gwin ter call none of um. Dat preacher and doctor today, when you told 'em what dar work in the future would be, just drawed up like dey was shot, an' Miss Susan had to push a handkerchief in her mouth to keep from laughing. But, boy, you made er 'pression."

"You think so, Uncle Jonah?" asked Jim.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Uncle Jonah. "Yes, yes, you certainly silent dat doctor, cose he likes to talk an' dat preacher looked like er kitten drapped in er pond."

"Ise always says," said Aunt Jane, "Dat Jim has a head on him. Nobody kin 'spute dat!"

"Ma, if you and Uncle Jonah will excuse me a little while, I am going out for a little fresh air."

"Yes, son," replied Uncle Jonah, "You is 'scused."

"Mind, Jim! Be careful," said Aunt Jane, "You know it is seven er clock. Don't be out

late. Dey er haulin' up mighty heap o' people now days."

"Oh, boy," said Uncle Jonah, "Wimmen folks always dat way, but nothin' ain't gwinter happen to you."

Jim pulled his coat about him and left.

After he was gone, Uncle Jonah said, "Janie dis makes close onter seventy years since I fuss court you, and I thinks ef you gwinter say yes, its high time uv it."

Aunt Jane raised the fire iron and said, "Jonah, Ise gib you dat!"

Jonah said, "I love no 'oman but you in all de world, and tell de ole man you'll marry 'im. You don't believe me, but once you git de pizen in yer heart you can't git it out till something is done. Will you marry me?"

Aunt Jane dropped her head, and after a long time said, "Jonah, gib me a little more time."

Jonah said, "I'll gib you till Saturday night."

While they were talking, Jim had walked out, and after wandering around, found himself at the home of Miss Susan Smith. They

were all glad to see him, and after a few greetings, he found himself and Miss Smith quite deserted by the others.

She looked at him and just laughed; he looked bashful and a bit surprised, or, I might say, wild. He had quite a few things in mind, but they seemed to have all left him.

"I haven't heard you tell me a thing about your trip since you returned," said Susan. "How was New York? I knew that you passed through there."

"Yes," said he, "I spent three days there, but I tell you, Miss Smith, that while it is a great city, there is no place like the South."

"Don't say that! Call me Susie like you always did. It makes us look like strangers to call me anything else," said Miss Smith.

"Well, you must call me Jim then. None of your Mr. Johnson for me, because I want to feel at home, too," remarked Jim.

"All right," said Susie, "But how about the party Friday night, we'll have to use a handle to your name then."

"I don't care," said Jim, "But I just can't feel at home unless you call me Jim."

"Well, M—er (I came near saying it), Jim, tell me about New York."

"Susie," said Jim, "New York is a marvel, a wonderland. Why, there are more people in one building than there are in this entire town of five thousand people. Do you know that in that city I have seen a bread line for one block long, one man standing behind the other, waiting two hours to get a loaf of bread. And what do you think of three car lines running down the same street over the same space; land is so valuable and people so numerous that it must be."

"But," remarked Susie, "It is a physical impossibility."

"Not so," said Jim.

"How can it be?" asked Susie.

"Why," said Jim, "One line is on the ground—then there is the elevated line in the air—"

"And the other."

"Under the ground," said Jim. "It is called the subway, and the cars under there don't run, nay, they go so fast they seem to fly. There are stores, restaurants and shops all under

ground, and thousands of people go for days without ever seeing daylight."

"It certainly is a great city," said Susie.

"Yes," continued Jim, "I am told that they have ten thousand police that daily go on duty, and over sixteen thousand Sunday School teachers who stand before classes on Sunday."

"Do many people die there?" asked Susie.

"Yes," said Jim, "They have a death every eight minutes and at that rate one would think that they would all die, but that is safeguarded by a birth every five minutes."

"Well," said Susie, "How about the girls. I expect that you got in love with some of them while there."

"They have beautiful girls," said Jim. "They look like angels; some are so small and fair and their eyes are so clear, the language so choice. I was one day standing on the corner of Broadway and 53rd St., and one passed me that fairly fluttered along. The odor that filled the air seemed sweet as Rose of Atter. I was lost in admiration."

"Say, you got stuck!" said Susie, and then stop.

"No, little girl, don't get jealous! I did not get in love," said he. "If I have ever loved a girl; if there is one that I might call my angel, if there is one that I shall ever look forward to as my love, believe me dear girl, Susie shall be that one."

Susie bowed her head and when words obeyed the mandates of will, she said, "Mr. Johnson, I—er—you see I forgot—Jim, if I could only believe it, but I was so afraid some Northern girl would steal your heart; then you know you are bright and I am dark and I am told that white women marry colored men in the North and I knew that I was poor; I didn't know what you might do."

"Not a word of it," said Jim, "There is very little of this intermarriage that you speak of; there are a few poor whites, Swedes and Irish, that marry with colored, but I tell you positively and emphatically that they are not millionaires. But for Jim Johnson's part, there is but one angel for me; she may be ten times darker than she is but I will ever love her. If she was as black as the ace of spades and possessed the character that she has, I would love her; yea, I would love but her."

"Susie, believe me," said Jim. "The Negro is not trying to get away from his race; there is no woman under the sun that holds the charms for him as is found in his own women. I know that I am fair, but did I make myself? Can I, by thinking, change one hair, or add one cubic inch to this great universe? I know you are dark, but did you make yourself? You had no part in it; it was the plan of the Almighty. But here we are: some are dark, some red, some yellow, some brown and some white, but who among us can change their skin? Not one.

"Twenty years ago, I found myself shaking on the knee of an old woman, but the dearest friend I have in all the world. She is black, but she has been my life. Susie, believe me," Jim stood up, "I had rather have my tongue plucked out and this arm cut off than deny her. And some day, when it falls my lot to take a wife, a woman like her, a dark woman, yes, a black woman shall be my wife and my life shall be lost in her life, and in eternity we shall be one."

"Oh," said Susie, "Jim, if I could only believe it; it's too much for me! I can't. Oh! That I could only believe it. I know I love you; for eight years my life has breathed no other desire, no other thought than to think of you. You remember the day we plaited the May pole together, and you were crowned king, and I queen? I thought that you looked like King Solomon that I read of in the Bible and I only wished that I might have appeared as the Queen of Sheba. They tell me she was black, Jim; I don't know how you felt, but since that day my soul has been living on your name."

Jim extended his hands and as he did it she remained a safe distance and extended her hands also. There in the gloom of a flickering lamp light that glimmered through a pink and green globe, they stood silently gazing into each other's eyes. A tear of joy like one big diamond rolled from the eyes of Susie and Jim was too high upon the hills of paradise to break the silence. They loosed their hands and half blinded by the joy and ecstasy, Jim

felt for his hat and stole his way into the dark. When he returned, Uncle Jonah had gone and Aunt Jane was deep in the throes of slumber.

CHAPTER X.

THE PARTY.

In a few days the town had forgotten the platform meeting and like all small cities, the whole society of young folks were absorbed in the coming event. The women were making new gowns, the girls were buying new ribbons and many who were not able to get new dresses were getting out the old ones from the trunks and either making them over again, darning the weak places, or they were dusting them up.

The preacher said that he did not like such events too well, as it was out of his line, but he didn't see how he could stay away.

The doctor was "Awful afraid," as he termed it, "That he might lose a call by not being at his office, and that old Doctor Boston or some other physician would get it, but he could not fail to attend the 'Levee.' Why," said he, "We doctors miss so much in the profession, there is so much self-denial and such a sacrifice on our part."

Uncle Jonah said that if he could call back forty years, he would set the pace for the youngsters.

"Ise er gettin' sorter painful now," said Uncle Jonah, "But de music sorter make dis old hoss prance. Janie knows it; she knows how in the old times we boys used to attend parties and dances and grab de rabbit, an' play Roguish Sam, all de night long."

The day of the party arrived. A large hall was secured. Some young women spent most of the morning in decorating and getting ready for the occasion. Ferns, flowers and plants of all kinds were brought and long tables with white cloths lined the building. At the head of one of the tables was an arch that was profusely decorated and under which were two chairs. On one the name of "Jim," was written with green leaves and studded with red holly berries. The other bore no initial but all understood that it was placed there for Jim's best friend. The minister was to sit at the other end of the table that held the "guest of honor," and the doctor was placed at the head of the table just over the

hall. Every preparation in the power of the people was made that the event might be one big success.

An orchestra of ten pieces had been secured from the neighboring town and many of the leading elites from there were expected to attend. Among the folks from that town who would attend was a talkative old fellow that was there by special invitation from the doctor and the preacher. No one else knew of his coming; he was the man who had given the doctor the thread as to Jim's ancestry.

That night at the party after the speeches, if any were made, and if there were no speeches, during the card party or some other game, he was to come up and make himself known to Jim and at the same time give him a bit of news so interesting to the preacher and doctor. By a concocted plan he would tell Jim how glad he was to meet him; that he was sorry that his mother was in jail—that he knew his father for years before he was shot, and that he was exceedingly glad to know that he had made a mark in life in spite of the fact that the odds were against him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE UNKNOWN MAN AND HIS FRIENDS.

The night covered the earth like a curtain. The moon, like a big ball of fire, was just rising from behind the hills of the old town. It seemed to be just behind the old station where Aunt Jane, Uncle Jonah and Miss Smith had waited for a train a trifle over a week ago. The old buildings, many of them had been there before the war; from those walls the slave and master had spent many a jolly day. And sometimes the weird yell of the slave had been heard late in the night, as he passed the old graveyard, to keep away the ghost; all bygone days. Slavery was gone, the whip lash gone, the songs gone, but the old house that once made this town the pride of the South stood there yet, like a mighty phantom against the grey moonlight, and the white tombstones and old black headboards stood there also as a reminder that the slave and master of those days were yet inseparable.

In a short while crowds of young men and

women were seen hurrying along the streets, the more fortunate in automobiles, laudaus and carriages, but the majority were walking.

Down back of the old jail, the shadows of three men might be seen—the doctor, preacher and our friend, the Unknown.

The voice of one said, "I would give a hundred dollars if I could learn all about—"

The Unknown said, "I tell you I know all about it."

"Well," said the preacher, "Tell us about it."

"I told you his father was dead—killed by his mother."

Preacher: "How about his mother?"

Unknown: "I know all about her."

Doctor: "You said she was in the chain gang."

Unknown: "Yes, or anywhere you want her."

The preacher and doctor in concert: "Do you think you can work it?"

Unknown: "If enough steam is put in it."

Doctor: "I don't know how you will do it unless you congratulate him on his speech be-

fore the company, and tell him this strange news as we said."

Unknown: "Put the steam behind it and I will do the rest."

"How much?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, not much," said the Unknown. "I heard the Elder say he would give a hundred bones, but I don't want that much."

"How much?" stammered the preacher. "Of course, a lot of things like the Gospel has to be free."

"This will not be free," said the Unknown.

"Well, set the price," said the doctor.

"No; you name it," replied the Unknown.

"How would a five spot look?"

"The devil you say!" exclaimed the Unknown. "What could I do with a five spot? Do you suppose I would come 'way over here and lose my rest and jeopardize my life and turn a girl's love to you all for five dollars? Not by a jug full."

"How much, then?" asked the doctor.

Unknown: "Make it fifty, and give half now and the balance when the duck is stewed."

Doctor: "Can't you do better than that? Call it twenty down. Of course I hope that you understand our position; we simply want to see him humiliated, as the town is wild over him."

"And a girl," said the Unknown. "All right, give me the twenty dollars and the other as you stated."

The doctor and the minister stepped aside. Speaking confidently the doctor said, "Elder, give me \$10 will you? I will give the other; of course we can get the other later."

Preacher: "I haven't mine now, but I can pay you Sunday. You fix it, it will be all right."

"How much have you now?" said the doctor.

The preacher felt in his pockets. "I could spare you thirty cents," said he.

The doctor turned ashy: "Say what man? Thirty cents! And I got \$19.70 to get up."

"See can't you get him to do a little better," said the preacher.

Doctor: "He has said what he would do."

Preacher: "And I have told you that finan-

cially I am incapacitated; in other words, I am short, but I will stand by you; yes, to the last ditch."

The Unknown (gruffly): "Gentlemen, if you gwinter do anything, let me have it, cose dis is sorter tedious work and I want a little something for this cold before the party."

Doctor: "All right, sir; but we are a bit short."

Unknown: "Well, give me what you have."

At which request the doctor gave him ten dollars and promised the other later.

"Now Elder, give me yours," said the Unknown.

The preacher gave him thirty cents. He looked at the minister and said: "Is this yours? Well, this is way over what I 'spected for preachers are generally nothing but talk—when—"

"Yes," said the preacher, "The last wine is the best."

Unknown: "But it seemed to be such little wine, 'specially when you said you would give a hundred dollars. I am surely glad, man, dat you did not say two hundred."

They parted, the doctor and preacher going in one direction and the Unknown in another. When they had separated, the preacher remarked to the doctor: "I guess you will take Miss Smith out?"

"No," said the doctor. "She has thrown me overboard."

"I wrote her," said the preacher, "To get the honor, and she answered that she was otherwise engaged, so I thought you were the one."

"Not I," said the physician.

CHAPTER XII.

TOAST MAKERS.

While the doctor and the preacher were holding a conference with the Unknown, Jim was far on the road pressing toward Susie's house, so when the conference ended they had reached the thoroughfare in the doctor's buggy, just in time to see Jim and Susie going down the street.

Jim said to Miss Smith, "Susie, I know you will pardon me for not bringing a team. I had one engaged, but it did not show up."

The reader can see at a glance that some one is doing underhanded work.

"Ah, Mr. Johnson," said Susie, "I am so glad that you did not bring it. You know that you will return to school and this is no time to waste money. We can walk that little distance. You know how we used to walk with Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah? And I know we are much bigger now."

As Jim and Susie marched along, she in

white and he in black, it looked like a wedding, all but the preacher. Jim, however, was afraid to touch her and barely held her arm. They fluttered like two butterflies in Spring, and as the moonlight struck their form, the long shadows united into one and resembled some angelic form crossing the Elysian hills. When they were within two blocks of the hall, they heard the music. The measured time seemed to have been intended for them to walk by. Now it stops, they play a medley, "Old Black Joe," "Dixie," then they struck up Bob Cole's and Rosamond Johnson's famous air, "If you like me as I like you and we both like each the same, this very day, if you may, I want to change your name."

Jim said, "I never heard anything sound so real in my life."

Susie flinched and drew up but simply drew a long breath without uttering a word.

They entered the hall amid applause, music and a most cordial reception.

Many of the young women were grouped in one part of the building while the young men were in another part talking about the silly

things that only young people can think to talk about. A few were having checkers, fortune games, lotto and dominoes while a small crowd was watching the orchestra. The tables seemed to be groaning beneath the loads of good things, while every now and then the grinding of ice cream freezers and the breaking of the ice might be heard. Salads, chickens, cakes, pies and other eatables so perfumed the air that appetite was sharpened upon entering the very door. Jim and Susie were soon lost in the crowd. Jim sometimes with a crowd of young ladies or young men about him, talking, chattering, smiling and joking, then again having some innocent game.

After a few moments, the preacher with another young leader arrived, then shortly after, the doctor leading a young lady dressed in full pink and a double portion of false hair and false diamonds, entered.

One of the girls said to the other, "He can't come in a Pullman so he took a tourist."

"Yes," said the other, "I do despise him. He tries to be so important and high toned."

"Mind," said the other, "Don't get jealous."

"Not me," replied the other, "I would pass by a hundred men like that and never see one of them, and that little old sawed off preacher is just like him."

The preacher walked over to where they were. He! He! laughed one, "We were just talking about—"

"Ah, girl," said the other. And by that time four or five had joined the party.

"I hope," said the preacher, "That it was something good."

"Yes, it was about your big sermons."

"That was so kind of you," said the preacher.

"We are delighted to see you tonight. We know how prejudiced preachers are toward such things."

"Yes, many of them are," said the preacher, "But I could not stay away. I wanted to honor our friend, the young college man who is so worthy."

"We are proud of him," said a chorus of voices.

"No one feels proud of me," said the preacher.

"You see," said one of the girls, "He is so nice. He grew up with us; we have known him so long and he is so fine."

The minister said, "If you ladies will excuse me a few minutes, I want to shake hands with my friend the doctor." The preacher walked over to where the doctor was and shook hands with him and the girl in pink. A broad grin stood on his face as he looked at the doctor and said, "Everybody coupled but the Divine?"

"Yes," said the lady, "It looks as though the Divine had a dozen couples with him a while ago."

"Ah," remarked the preacher, "Just killing time, that is all."

Every now and then the doctor and preacher would gaze toward the door as though they were looking for some one. The fleeting moments rolled by and soon grew into hours. The musicians became tired and stopped every little while to talk. Supper now was all made ready and the guests were served. As a special arrangement to seat the guests without that noise and stir that follows such entertainments,

the party was coupled off and the band struck up Repaz Grand March, and after promenading around the hall two or three times in the grand march, each one found his place at the table. Every one just as arranged to a very gnat's heel. The preacher's back was to the door while the doctor was seated in a position to gaze into the darkness, therefore the preacher watched the doctor while the doctor watched the door.

Supper was soon over and several were called upon to give toasts. The doctor was requested to give one in honor of our guest as a "college man." The preacher on, "Opportunity as it presents itself to a young man just leaving college." Susie spoke on, "Jim as she knew him in the public school," another on, "What will his future be," and several others on different subjects.

The doctor in his speech devoted much time in telling of his college life as he found it at Maharry, but seemed to have missed the mark entirely as relating to Jim's college life or anything else about him.

The minister was not so narrow, said he,

"Opportunity ever stands in the way of a young man leaving school; as he enters upon life there is but one thing to do and that is to seize it. I find that most young men are too anxious to marry. That is a mistake, no man ought to marry until he has money or something to live upon. (The doctor coughed). Yes, I repeat it that most men marry too young."

Susie in a very brilliant and stirring speech, told of him—Jim—"In public school, how he had helped the dull students, how he led the class and how without any support of parents, as he was an orphan, yet, without the aid of special friends he did whatever his hands found to do. Like a leaping comet he had swept by one comrade after another, till now he lacked but one year of being a full-fledged college graduate, and just think how he has done within twenty years what it requires forty years for most men to accomplish."

The one who spoke on "What will his future be," became rhapsodical. He said, "Why what shall he be, a blacksmith to shoe his neighbors' horses? Nay; if he did, success would be his.

A cook? If so, he would be the chief. A preacher? No, that high calling has no charms for him, but if he was, you heard him Sunday afternoon, you can but surmise that no three churches in town could hold his crowd, though they were built into one. A doctor? No, I don't think he would glory in giving castor oil, but I dare say that if he was, he would lead the state and make new discoveries in medicine. His place would be in the long line of stalwarts who make medicine, write books and tell others what to do. What his future will be, I know not, but in my vision I can see him entering the gilded hall of fame; I can see the daughters of fortune placing a wreath of victory upon his brow. Ladies and gentlemen, let me implore you to rise and give three cheers for Jim, the young leader of Bowser town." They all arose, even the doctor and the preacher and gave the yell. Over in the corner around the punch table about a dozen fellows could be discovered who would occasionally quench their thirst on punch. During the supper and while the speeches were being made, they had not been discov-

ered, but no sooner than the yell for Jim was made, like a sleeping man just aroused on the train, reaches his station, jumps up and joins the crowd and does it in a hurry. All looked around as they yelled with a tremendous applause. Among them was a big chunky athletic dark looking fellow, who seemed to have shouted, "Three cheers for Jim," so loud that his voice sounded high above the others. His voice was so strong that all had to notice him, a red bandana was around his neck, and his coat collar pulled up. When they cheered three times he cheered again, "hurrah, for Doctor Jim." The doctor looked at the preacher and winked.

CHAPTER XIII.

DID YOU EVER SEE A SHOOT-THE-CHUTE?

The man so recently discovered was the Unknown. The feast being over, the music started and a few began waltzing, but the majority played some game. The doctor walked over to the group of men near the punch bowl and up to the man with the red bandana about the neck whom you have no doubt guessed was none other than the Unknown, and said, "If you intend to do that, what make you don't shoot?"

The Unknown replied, "When I sez a thing you can 'pend on it."

"Well shoot then!" said the doctor. The doctor then walked over where Jim was and soon was lost in the mingling crowd. In the meantime, he tried to get as many friends about Jim and Susie as he could, always taking great pains to show special courtesies toward Jim. The preacher having seen the doctor conversing with the Unknown, thought the time was ripe for the triumph, so he busied

himself drawing all that he could about the guest of honor. He and the doctor vied together to see who could go one better in story telling.

The crowd by the punch bowl, having dried that vessel, drew near the company who had formed a circle about Jim. As they were passing, the doctor looked at the Unknown and winked and then back at the crowd, remarking at the same time, "Have you ever seen a shoot-the-chute?" Then glanced about him for the Unknown, but to his surprise and chagrin the Unknown was passing out the door. He looked at the preacher and frowned. The story telling reached a very sudden end and one by one the joy-makers filed out of the door. Jim and Susie went along with the crowd. The preacher went with the doctor and the girl in pink walked between them. The music hushed, the lights of the hall were darkened and the party of Bowser town became a thing of history.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MYSTERY.

After Jim and Susie had gone a certain distance, once or twice he thought that he saw some one lurking along in the dark. He said nothing; they went on conversing and praising the different features of the entertainment. Jim bade Susie good night and started for home; a stick cracked near him once or twice. Once he thought that he saw a form stumbling along in the dark, and managing always to hold the dark street. When he got near his home he saw it again. He stopped and made an investigation and to his surprise the man came toward him. Jim could not make out its form. He saw something in the man's hand like an old Lincoln Springfield rifle. His hair stood on end; his skin grew tight; as the man approached, he stopped and let down the trigger of the rifle. By this time Jim was white with fear; he felt his pocket, grabbed his pen knife in one hand and was almost about to take his sky piece in the other. (The reader

can surmise what he was about to do.) The man broke out in a laugh, "Haw! Ha! Haw! Is dat you Mr. Johnson? Why, Ise 'spect dis is a sorter diserpintment to you, but I wuz on picket guard tonight."

"Why, that's you Uncle Jonah?" asked Jim. "You certainly had me scared, old fellow; yes, sir."

"Yes, Ise been scared myself," responded Uncle Jonah.

"Now, Uncle Jonah," said Jim, "Remember that I am never anything but Jim to you. Don't call me anything else, for if you do, I can't feel at home."

"Yas, boy," said Uncle Jonah. "I bet Jane ain't slept er wink tonight. Dis is bin an awful time—awful time."

"What is the trouble?" said Jim with surprise.

"Why everything is, is er pesterin' us. It makes me think 'bout de time John Brown was 'rested at Harper's Ferry."

"What is it, Uncle Jonah?" said Jim. "You are killing me by degrees." Jim felt his brow from which cold sweat was pouring down.

"Sonny, I sez its hard to tell," answered Uncle Jonah. "'Bout seven o'clock I goes down to see Jane, and I had hardly taken my seat, when a big 'mobile stop right at de door; er man comes in wid a red handerchief 'round his neck and sez: 'Is Mr. Jim Johnson in?' Janie says 'No.' He sez not a word, den he disappeared; de 'mobile goes, too."

"Uncle Jonah," said Jim, "Did he leave in the automobile, or was he walking?"

"Ise not quite bright on dat pint," replied Uncle Jonah.

"But they left," said Jim.

"Yes; den I 'specting nothing but sorter lighting Jane on bit of news I had hearn by a man as I wuz comin' down de street while he wuz a-telling another; he didn't see me. I wuz in de dark, and he said 'Jim Johnson,' and I wuz tolerable anxious to learn what he wanted wid Jim Johnson. Well, he said dat he had made \$3.00; said a certain doctor had given him three dollars to disappoint you wid his carriage, so I sorter cleared my throat and he seeing me sez to the tuther man: "Dat's old Jonah. Don't tell him."

"That's the click, is it?" said Jim.

"I goes down," said Jonah, "To Jane's to look you up about it, but when I gits dar you wuz gone, den I in a very quiet way breaks de news to Janie. While Ise dar talking to her de 'mobile passed agin and after a while I hearn one pass agin, so sez I to Janie, Ise mighty 'rested in you, Ise gwine ter be your picket guard an ef a dozen doctors or anybody else start anything Ise right dar already cocked and primed.

"How can you account for that?" said Jim rather seriously.

"I dunno, boy. I wuz at de hall when de doctor and dem were making de speeches and I seed you and Susie and hearn what dey said 'bouten you. When you comes outen de hall I follows on behind, case I wuz er picket."

The two walked on together and when they reached the house, Aunt Jane was up by the fire. When she saw Jim her eyes sparkled with joy. Uncle Jonah with his Springfield, walked behind.

Said he: "Janie, I wuz powerful scared once tonight that I might have to do some

fightin', but didn't." While he was speaking a big automobile rolled up to the door and our friend the Unknown stepped to the door and knocked. When he was admitted, Jim at once recognized him as the man at the party who gave the fourth yell, for he had on the same bandana about his neck.

Said he: "I wish to speak to you all a bit, but swear that you will abide by the contract."

"It's not the best thing to do to swear all de time 'less you knows what you are swearing," replied Uncle Jonah.

"Nothing to hurt you," said the Unknown. They all three stood and raised their hands, but the Unknown said, "No! Let us join them, and as we are but four, let's swear by the four winds of the Universe." They joined their hands and in these words the Unknown said: "Swear that you will not open a certain letter that I will give you tonight until nine a. m. in the morning; that when you do open it that you three will stand by the tombstone over the street in front of the bank on Lemon Street. Many people think that it is a monument, but

it is a tombstone that was placed over a grave just twenty years ago, at which time that lot was a private lot."

"Yes," said Aunt Jane, "I remember it well when dar wuz a house on de lot."

He continued, "Do you so promise me?"

They answered in concert: "We do."

Their hands were loosened and the Unknown took a long grey letter from his pocket. It was closed with wax and a seal thereon; he placed it in the hands of Jim at the same time saying, "Young man, I give it to you because it is yours, but keep the vow upon the honor of a gentleman." He bade them goodnight and the automobile left. The Unknown stood on the side of the driver.

CHAPTER XV.

TWO SEPARATE SCENES.—THE DUEL.

When the automobile left, Jim tucked the letter safely into his pocket and after a few passing remarks, left the evening to Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane.

In spite of the worry and excitement the blessing that belonged to youth was his. His eyes had hardly closed as he struck the bed before he was fast asleep and knew nothing nor thought nothing till next morning about seven o'clock, when he heard a knocking on the window and a familiar voice: "You all ain'ter gwinter git up today?"

A voice answered from the little shed or kitchen, "Ise up already, you don't find me in de bed at dis hour, but I thought I wouldn't bother Jim yit, cose I know he is tired."

"Open de door den, don't you know it's eight o'clock and fast gwine on nine?"

"No; I wasn't er thinking it dat late. Jim! Jim! Son, you better git up."

Jim rolled over, stretched out, bounded from the bed. With the practice of quick dressing learned at the school, in five minutes he was dressed, head combed and ready for breakfast, which had been on the table for some time.

"Dat boy sho' is pert," said Uncle Jonah. "Dese boys 'round here always take an hour to dress."

* * * * *

That night when the automobile left Aunt Jane's house, it stopped and put the Unknown off near the doctor's, but to his surprise the doctor wasn't home, so he wandered down to the peacher's, and just as he expected, the doctor and preacher were holding their council.

One said, "You did wrong to pay so much in advance."

"I thought I would encourage him."

"But you see what he did."

"He did nothing."

"When I thought that he was about ready to snap the cap he had sneaked out."

"How long have you known him?"

"I don't know him."

"What is his name?"

"I tell you I don't know."

"How did you find him?"

"He found me."

"You mean to say you don't know him?"

"No; I don't know him?"

"That is funny."

"I don't see anything so funny about that. I was attending a case over there, and was asking folks did they know anything about the parents of Jim Johnson, and this man came up and took me aside, and said he could make me wise. I told him how I loved Susie and that if he would help me what I would do. Then he made an agreement to meet me tonight as we did."

"What did you say was his name?"

"I don't know, I tell you."

By that time a blundering was heard on the porch, then a knock. The preacher opened the door, and to his surprise the Unknown with the bandana about his neck was before him, looking half sleepy and a jug in each hand. The preacher called the doctor: "Doctor Jones, here is a man who wants to see you."

The doctor came, or rather walked, to the door.

"I want to see you both," said the Unknown. Then he went to crying: "I think you did me fine, call yourself a preacher and tried to beat me out of my money."

"I resent it," said the preacher.

Unknown: "You sent me nothing; I ain't got nothing but 30 cents; an you talk about best wine; Ise got some right here in dis jug as good as anybody wants."

The preacher: "Man, I can't fool with you, I don't owe you nothing."

Unknown (talking louder and half crying): "You do. You owe me \$9.70 and dat Doctor Jones owes me \$30.00. You know! You know you owe me! I want my money, I tell you!"

"Man, come inside; don't talk so loud or you will wake up everybody in this community," said the doctor.

Unknown: "I ain't coming no whar," (speaking louder) "I think you fellows are beats, I want my money; you know dat you owe me."

The preacher, speaking to the doctor pri-

vately: "Say, man, we got to get this fellow from here, if we don't he will ruin us."

"What can we do," said the doctor.

"I don't know," said the preacher, "But we have to do something."

Unknown (speaking still louder): "Gentlemen, I wants my money! I says! I did your work, so I want my money! I'm going and git a perlice an' you will give me my money."

The preacher was so anxious to get him away that he said, "Go get him then, we don't owe you nothing. I don't know your name."

Unknown (leaving): "I know yourn. You is Elder Slackum. I know all 'bout where you come from."

At that news, the preacher drew up, then remarked: "You know I had rather give that old guy a thousand dollars than be followed up by him."

The doctor said: "What are we going to do if he comes here with his police. Of course we have done nothing, but you know the scandal in court and the newspaper publicity to such things."

"Yes," said the preacher, "Guilty or not,

when it gets to the public, some one believes it."

The reader may not have forecasted the plot of the Doctor in finding Jim's ancestry and the public demonstrations at the Hall, if it had been carried out, but that was his aim. He simply wanted to create a scandal, and whether it was true or untrue, it would serve his purpose.

About two o'clock the doctor said: "I guess I will go, as it's late."

The preacher said: "Not tonight, you will either stay here or I will go and stay with you, but you will never remember leaving me here alone."

While they were talking, and had decided to go to bed, even if they could not sleep, a heavy stepping resembling that very much of the drunken man was heard, then a knock.

"Doctor Jones!" called the voice, "Is you gwinter gimme my money? Wake up, men, and gib me my money! I got to go home to my wife. Elder! I want my money!"

The preacher got up and opened the door. The Unknown pushed in. He tried to pre-

vent him, but with jug in hand, the Unknown pushed in and continued to speak louder: "Give me my money." The men could not appease him, so they made up what they could and gave him, but yet was short. After he received what they gave and a promise for the balance, they tried to bid him goodnight, but he yet hung around and refused to go.

He said, "Elder, 'scuse me, but I want to taste a little of dis for my cole. Have some?"

The preacher said: "No, thank you, I never drink."

"It won't hurt you."

"No; I just don't think it right for preachers to drink."

"I seed you do worse than that."

"I think not."

"I see you and Doc tried to make me tell a story on dat young man."

"Man, I don't understand you, and if you say that again, I will put you out of here. Don't lie on me!"

"You call me a liar and I will break this jug on you."

"I did not say liar, but don't lie on me."

"Dat's what you said; you're a liar if you said I lied on you."

The preacher ran out of his coat, grabbed his sword out of his K. of P. scabbard and made a lunge at the Unknown, but the Unknown man dropped one jug and raised the other and warded off the blow. They stood in the room gazing at each other.

The Unknown said: "I have a mind breaking this jug over your head."

The preacher made a lunge at him again. He warded it off with the jug.

In the meantime he seized the scabbard and twisted the belt around his arm and when the preacher struck at him again, he knocked the sword from his hand. The doctor seized it and ran out on the porch; he ran behind him; the two stood in the moonlight. This time he struck at the doctor, saying: "You all want to run over me."

The preacher ran out with a jug as a weapon. About this time the fight was pretty warm, when all at once a lady dressed in white said, "Doctor, what's the matter?"

The Doctor raised his head; the fight

stopped, the Unknown ran off, the peacher hurried into the house. It was Susie.

"Nothing, Susie; what are you doing out so late?"

"Mother took suddenly ill," said Susie, and there was no one at home to send, so I ran over for you to come at once."

"Yes," said the doctor, "That is one of our Society Practices. We can't well do it in the day without creating excitement, so we use this hour."

"Why did the others run?" said Susie.

"Oh," said the doctor, "They did not want you to see them."

Susie hurried on back home, and as quickly as the doctor could get over to the office, and to the patient, he made it.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LETTER.

At nine o'clock the next morning, around a big monument, standing ten feet from the top to the base, made of Vermont marble and beautifully carved, bearing the inscription: "To Commemorate the Daring Deeds of the Noble," stood three persons: An old woman at the east, an old man at the west, and a young man in the middle, looking toward the north. If it was a novelist writing this, he would say, a robust young man in the bloom of life whose cheeks were painted by the fluid of youth, curly hair of chestnut hue, lips that parted, his body strong and athletic, shoulders that bid fair to some day be graced by a martial uniform, standing there like a giant, but so drooped that day by strange thoughts that the weight of so little a missile as a letter bent him and pressed tears from his eyes.

He looked at the tombstone and his thoughts rambled. Suppose, whispered he in his heart, that she sleeps there, my mother; he sleeps

there, my father. Mother Jane has told me so much about them; oh, I wonder if it is true. If I only knew it, if it is true and if it is so and I knew it, I would bow on my knees and kiss the dust to their memory. I would press my lips to this cold marble. I would bathe it down in tears, and feeling for it I would reach my arms about it and feel for once that my mother had her arms about me. They tell me that spirits walk, they mount the air, and seeing her poor son with a bleeding heart from Zion, she would come and kiss my brow. My father would join her in a whisper that would go through my soul like a thunder roll, I would hear their voices so loud and yet sweet as an angel's voice say: "My son." In this halo of glory I would read this letter written by the fingers of my mother. Here and there I would see tear drops and then the news would break upon me—her last words."

He would paint the picture of a helpless old woman, who for ninety years had fought hardships, pain; yea, death. Who had struggled on through life, some days on a single morsel; yet she lived. Every hair in her head was

white and yet never once had she tried to hide them with dye. Her heart was so gay, she simply thanked God that she lived. She never tired talking of the past, yet her eyes ever tried to penetrate the future. She had been wooed by many, but only knew one husband, who was now sleeping beneath the sod. He had gone and her friends, one by one, like the stars had all gone down. Now, at the parting of the ways, her only friends, the sun and moon, one would soon be hidden behind the hills; the other was just rising. There she stood, gazing at the west with a soul as big as the universe and a heart made of love. There in the cold air of the morning, she stood thinking and wondering if what she had sought for twenty years was now to be revealed by the letter.

He would describe Uncle Jonah as a feeble old man who has crossed the hills and vigor of manhood and now stood within the vale, the dews of eighty-three winters had frosted his brow and the sweep of rolling years had taken the activity from his limbs. He lived in the past; he talked of the darings of Brown, Jeff. Davis, Lee and Grant, and convulsed the

crowd in laughter by his native wit and ability, and the wonderful stories of Lincoln, as he stood there like the sun almost down in the west; he wondered whether or not the news sought for twenty years was not soon to be revealed.

The town clock in solemn tones, one after another, struck nine. Aunt Jane, with tears in her eyes; Uncle Jonah, fairly devouring the letter with his eyes, so anxious to learn the contents; Jim, with a trembling hand, tore off a bit of paper and dropped it as though each piece represented the stroke of the clock, and as the old clock struck nine, his fingers pushed open the letter. The first thing that met his gaze was the edges of bank notes. A little note written by the nervous hand of a woman, stained in two or three places, and written on pink paper, was tucked among it. He read the note and then in a soft audible voice to Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah, who drew nearer, he counted one thousand (\$1,000), two thousand (\$2,000), three thousand (\$3,000), four thousand (\$4,000), five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

"Five thousand dollars," said Jim.

"What you say, son?" said Aunt Jane. Poor old soul liked to have shouted.

"Five thousand dollars," said Jim.

"Is dat real money, son?" said Uncle Jonah.

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"Well, as rich as my old master used to be in slavery time, I never seed him wid dat much."

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"Sonny," said Uncle Jonah. "Is dat sho' 'nuff money wid de stamp on it?"

"It's all right."

"Well, I can't believe it."

"Jonah," said Aunt Jane, "Jim sez it's so, he knows."

"Yes, Janie," said Uncle Jonah, "But dese boys nowdays all call things by different names."

"Jim is all right dar," Aunt Jane replied.

"I thought he sorter might call \$10.00 a thousand, cause jist think how many mules I can git wid five thousand dollars."

"Jim is right," said Aunt Jane.

"Yes, it is right," said Jim.

Uncle Jonah shook his head. "Well I hearn educated people change things powerful bad. I hearn jist a little thing as a 'tator ed dat preacher was ur talking about fer a long time I did not know what he was talking about. I always call um 'tators. Ole boss raised all of um in slavery time on um as 'tator and Jim, your ma Jane, I seed her give you 'tators, yit dis preacher had ur nother name for dem. So sonny, don't git mad at your old Uncle Jonah, but does you mean \$10.00 or a thousand?"

"Five thousand," said Jim, "But I want to read you the letter."

PARIS, FRANCE, *March 30th.*

Dear Jim:—

"I hope you are well and getting on fine in your studies and that Aunt Jane is yet a comfort and help to you, even in her old age. There is another old sire that I like to think about: dear Uncle Jonah. I hope to reward them some day, but God is good and he ever keeps the faithful. I am enclosing you a few pennies (\$5,000.00) five thousand dollars, to finish your schooling and help fix you and

Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah in shape to meet us.

This envelope has a letter written on it also, but its contents cannot be read unless the envelope is dropped in water and kept awhile, but upon the honor of a gentleman, do not open it for ten days after you open this. The man with a bandana around his neck, as well as other friends for twenty years have watched over you and Aunt Jane, and Uncle Jonah. Only do not ask who wrote this letter or sent the money. Don't ask even who the party is that watches over you. Let me make a request. Put the money in the bank at once and on the tenth day, you and Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah and the best friend you have in the world as far as you know, lady or gentleman, but a lady preferred, and the Unknown man who delivered this letter who will call that day at nine p. m., meet together and dip the envelope in water and read my message. The Unknown man understands it well; he will fix it for you. Kiss Aunt Jane and hug Uncle Jonah for me.

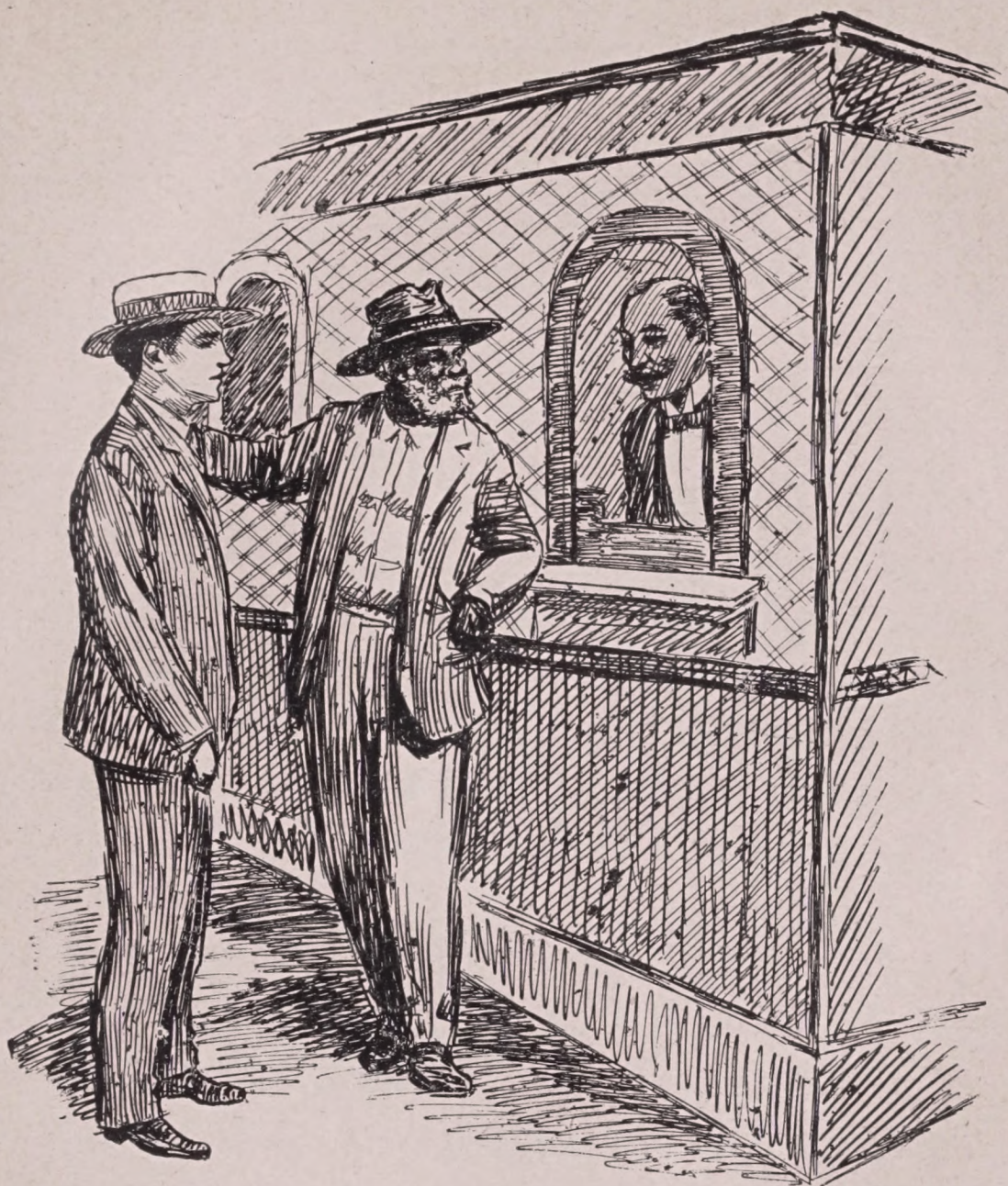
Your loving dear.

P. S.—I sign no name, but shall stain it with

one of the thousand of salty tears I have shed for my love."

A tear spot not only was found on the bottom of the letter, but all through it.

Jim, Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah walked over to the bank, and for the first time in their lives, deposited money. Jim understood it theoretically, so that day he put it into practice. Uncle Jonah touched the pen as the person recommending Jim. When the banker asked Uncle Jonah how could he recommend him when he didn't know the banker, Uncle Jonah replied: "I nursed your daddy, Captain. I knew you 'fo' you wuz born, and for 'mending dis boy, I 'mend him for the President of the United States. An' dis gal you see (pointing to Aunt Jane) was er woman 'fo' freedom wuz dee-clared."



“I’D ’MEND HIM FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES”—Said Uncle Jonah.

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO NERVOUS MEN.—THE HAIR TURNS WHITE IN A NIGHT.

It was twelve o'clock that Saturday before the Rev. Mr. Slackam got out of bed. In general appearance, he looked as though he was bowed in health and troubled in mind. He tried several times to get out his sermon or read over those already written, but upon doing so he found himself always looking into vacancy.

He shoved his sermon book aside, grabbed his hat and went down town. As he walked he had even a stealthy move. He was constantly gazing in every direction; he saw the whole town, and apparently saw nothing. By far he was not the man of a day before. He couldn't believe himself that such a change could take place in so short a time. He stood in front of a show window with hat in hand and to his surprise his hair had turned white. He did not know himself; he wondered was it Slack-

am or someone else. "In a single night," said he, "In just a single night, I, but thirty-one years of age, am an old man."

Before he realized it, tears stood in his eyes, his throat got full. He repeated again, "Old in a single night."

While standing meditating, one walked up and tapped him on the shoulder, and said: "Elder, I want my money," and broke into a laugh. It was Doctor Jones. He remarked: "Man, we had a time of it last night."

"Yes," said the preacher, "Much more like that and I will be no more."

The doctor replied: "I certainly gave Susie a turn, didn't I?"

"Yes."

"Well," continued the Doctor, "I remember when I was at Meharry, my chum and I got all worked up to get us a private skeleton. Of course they had plenty of skeletons, but we wanted one of our own. We talked about it and planned for it, but times were hard and we never could get the price, so my friend says to me: 'Jones, I have a scheme. I know where we can get one.' I was tickled to death and

said: 'Old boy, pop your whip.' He says: 'Jones, there is a little graveyard on the edge of town. Now we will watch for the next funeral, and at night, while the dirt is yet fresh, we will get our man, you see me?' I said: 'I think I do, but it's a little cloudy. How are you going to get him to your closet, Doctor?' 'Oh, that's easy,' said he. 'We will rent a team—say a horse and buggy for a dollar, and that's all the expense.' Said I: "How about the decomposition?" 'Jones,' said he, 'The receipt for cooking a rabbit is to first catch him. We can handle that matter.' The opportune time arrived, an old fellow died; we rented a team and played the trick. My friend was tickled thoroughly to know that at last we were fixed. We dug up our man, placed him in the buggy, wrapped him securely in a sheet, then we went back to cover the grave. While we were gone, some other student (it must have been a student) heard of our scheme, so he takes the dead man out while we were at the grave. Then he gets in the buggy with the sheet about him. Now as we opened the gate to go out of the cemetery we

had a glimpse of some one coming, hence, you see we had to hurry. We jumped in the buggy and went off in a trot. When we were 'way on the road, my friend pushed the sheet about the dead man and 'lowed, 'Jones, this man is warm.' I said, 'Of course; that sometimes happens, as you know the profession teaches.' We went on. I thought nothing. He felt him again and shook his head and repeated: 'Take his hand, he is warm!' I felt the dead man's hand and then said, 'He sure is.' The dead man said, 'If you had been down where I've been, you would be warm, too.'

"What did you do?" asked the preacher.

"I don't know, myself; I know that I didn't see my friend any more for a day. I lost my hat and it yet remains a mystery what became of the horse. Now," continued the doctor, "That thing last night beat that."

By that time they had reached the doctor's office. As they walked in and removed their hats, the doctor jumped back and said: "You have fooled me, this is not Slackam I am addressing?"

The preacher said, with a voice that yet bordered on fear: "I am he."

"No, man!"

"Yes, I am he; it will all soon be over. Here I am gazing at myself, an unknown man!"

The preacher reached out his hand and the doctor caught him as he fell to the floor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TWO TEMPERAMENTS DESCRIBED.

The reader, no doubt, has noticed that the doctor was like lots of humanity, a man who weeps, but yet possessed an iron will. He could think on his feet, and while he was treacherous and jealous, yet supremely selfish, he could always retain self-control, and generally knew what to do next. He was a bad man, he was a good man, he was one of those contradictions in nature. He would weep over the grave of an enemy and on another occasion rob a friend. The preacher was different. He possessed a green eye of jealousy, and when he hated you he fought you; like Judas Iscariot, he could sop in the dish with you and forecast your death. He was a little thing—a little world—but an atom. The doctor was like steel, flexible, looked soft, but was hard. The preacher a piece of cast iron, painted in silver, shining, hard, stout, strong, but brittle.

That night the doctor had gone over to Susie's house, relieved her mother, got in a

word sidewise. On love, made a few dollars, returned home, took a two hours nap, up by eight and out on time for his calls, chanced to see Aunt Jane and Jim leaving the bank. He was making calls right on when he discovered his friend, the preacher. If there was anything at all that troubled him, it was the desire to know what would be the outcome of this midnight's episode with the Unknown man.

CHAPTER XIX.

A HOOK IN THE HEART.

When Saturday night came, almost before the sun was down, Uncle Jonah called at Aunt Jane's house, he asked for Jim, but was told that Jim tried to remain at home, but so desirous of breaking the news to Susie, that he had gone to her home; however, he had only been gone a few minutes. "In fact," said she, "Don't see why you didn't meet him."

"Didn't though," said Uncle Jonah.

"You just as well come in," said Aunt Jane.

"Sort a think so," replied Uncle Jonah.

"What you gwine to do tomorrow, Jane? I was er coming down the street an' I hearn dat the preacher was dead. Ise not so bright about it, but dey tell me its so is shure an' if it is so, we is in a bad fix."

"No, Jonah, it can't be so," said Aunt Jane.

"The people said so, and I wuz wonderin' what we would do fer preachin' tomorrow. Let's hope 'tain't so."

"Hope all you want to, but 'tain't gwinter

change it. I tell you lots of things going on new now-of-days. It 'pears sorter like the first of freedom," said Uncle Jonah. "I would have went down there, but I had a little business down here. You know I tell you dat we would take 'til Saturday night, and den we would git married.

"Jonah, you 'staken," said Aunt Jane. "I said give me twelve Saturday night to think 'bouten it."

"I know 'twas somethin' like dat," replied Uncle Jonah.

While they were talking Jim walked in. "Why, how are you, Uncle Jonah?" said Jim.

"Sort of tollable, thank you, son. How is you?"

"Quite well, thank you."

"Come nigh the fire."

"No, thank you, Uncle Jonah. I just forgot a poem I wanted to take over to show Susie."

"Since you been gone, I 'spect you was mighty nigh there," replied Aunt Jane.

"Yes, Ma," Jim remarked, "I was about a block from her house before discovering I did not have it—that. Well, I will be seeing you,

Uncle Jonah, but don't forget Monday night of next week."

"No; I will be down," said Uncle Jonah, and then renewed his conversation with Aunt Jane. "Janie, how about it?"

"What?"

"You gwinter marry me?"

"Jonah, things changes so."

"Dat's it, I want a change."

"Sorry, but you have to give me twelve adder the ten days. When we see what Jim's got to do about dat letter."

Uncle Jonah wiped a **tear** from his eyes and said, "But de pizen is in my heart, Janie, say yes?"

Aunt Jane shook her head, so Uncle Jonah returned home just as he did many times before, disappointed, but still hoping.

* * * * *

Jim, upon reaching Susie's, was received with the cordiality of a prince. Said she: "I have seen many receptions in Bowser, but not one so fine as the one that we had last night. You think it was fine?"

Jim: "Indeed so, that speech of yours was

the greatest thing. I have heard college girls speak and the best of them, but that speech of yours was the best I have ever heard any woman deliver."

"My dear Jim, if you say that you will embarrass me, for you know I am only a poor girl who has had but limited opportunities."

"Dear little girl, I got to thinking about you last night and I wrote these lines:

*Sing, oh, my angel, sing;
Such joys bring thou to me;
That e'er thy voice doth ring—
Fill thou my soul with glee.*

*Last night a dream had I,
As slept I upon my bed;
Thee saw, I passed me by,
And after thee I sped.*

*'Twas 'mong our lakes that boil
'Neath Bowser's sunny clime;
On America's fairest soil,
Where love is told in rhyme.*

*When said thou, you love me;
Lost was gone my mind;
Adore I, the track of thee
My love for thee sublime.*

"Oh Jim, that's fine."

"I am so glad you think so; any way it is my heart you know. Susie, I found out about the carriage—why I couldn't get it."

"Did you. I am glad you saved the money, but tell me about it."

"Not right now. Wait a while."

"Why not now?"

"No. Wait."

"If you say so."

"Susie, I want to make an engagement with you."

Susie drew up, her heart beat faster. Like a flash a spark shot through her mind. She thought of her mother who was not necessarily prejudiced toward Jim, but she always wanted her daughter to marry a doctor or a preacher, or, as she used to say, "A big man." Susie, for her part, loved Jim as David did Jonathan, with her whole soul, but how could she go

against her mother. The doctor had just been there that morning, and although her mother was very sick, he had relieved her, and in fact she was well, and as he always did chat so pleasantly, as she said, and there was something in his very manners that she liked.

"Yes," said Jim, "An engagement for Monday night. It may be a little late, about 8:30, at my home. Now, I will call for you."

"All right," said Susie.

"You will not have to stay so long," said Jim.

Susie seemed puzzled, but Jim was equally puzzled; therefore, he could not enlighten her, yet he felt that she was his best friend. There was the hook of love in her heart. The same hook was in his; therefore, flutter as they may, some day they would be pulled upon the banks of matrimony.

CHAPTER XX.

MONDAY NIGHT—THE MYSTERIOUS FLUID.

By the quick change of temperature that so often took place at Bowser, it would require an expert weather man to forecast what the weather would be within the next ten hours. The day looked for, Monday, the tenth day, had come. How slowly did time seem to drag, not only to Susie and Jim, but even to Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane. Time always drags, it seems, to the young, who are full of vitality and anxious for certain days. To a child, Christmas never comes fast enough or, say, closing school day, or even birthday, but to the old, time flies. We hardly finish paying last Christmas bills before it is time to start all over again. The girl is budding fast into womanhood; the boy now tall as father; it seemed but yesterday when they were babies upon our knees. Everyone looked forward with a certain degree of expectancy.

The day had come; Aunt Jane fasted as she needed special prayer to tide her over any

news of a sad nature. "Suppose," said she within her heart, "That it might develop that this boy is a white child and, that if such is the case, the law would force upon us a separation at once," and in her words, "I'm gittin' old, now; for years he has been my life. When my husband died, twenty-one years ago, de load was too much for me. We had been walkin' down the lane of time for about fifty years, together in slavery and in freedom; in Virginia, Carolina and Flurdy. In perfect love we lived together, and regretted it narry time to quit. When he died, sez I, 'life ain't worth livin'; I have tried many er time to die, but I had to wait fer de good Lord to call me. Sometimes Jonah console me, as he an' my husband was er courtin' me de same time, and one time I could hardly tell which I'd marry, den I married Jim. Now Jim died. I wasn't dar, as he died at sea, and I seed him no more after a evening when he was gwine to his work, and he kissed me good-bye and up an' sez, 'Jane, I don't know when I kin git back, but ef I don't git back, Heaven is mine.' So I couldn't marry no more. So a year after dat I finds dis boy.

He woke up de spark in my breast. I sez, 'Jane, raise dat chile an' some day he makes you glad.' From de fuss day down to dis, he is like Joseph in Pharoh's house—he bless de house and luck is mine. Before dat, I couldn't git work sometimes, but atter dat I got plenty work—easy jobs and good pay. Now if he is taken away ——" and she would kneel and pray and put her hands to her eyes as tears rolled down in floods: "Oh, merciful Marster Jesus, ef *Jim is only white*, ef he is taken from me, no more Ma Jane, no more my son! Ef he is taken, Lord, let me die that day." Her groans, her love, would melt you to tears.

Uncle Jonah thought lots, but said little. Sometimes he might have been caught shaking his head and saying to himself: "Five thousand dollars. Enough to buy a forty acre tract of land, ten mules and a wagon. I tell you it ain't too late for a raccoon to wear a pleated bosom shirt."

Susie, in her expectation, thought possibly that Jim wanted to clinch their engagement; hence she didn't know just how, as she said, "I can break the news to mother, for she

seems to like that preacher and doctor mighty well. I don't know what Jim is going to do, but I am quite certain that he doesn't want to preach or mix pills, either."

Jim, in his expectation, thought that the best thing to do was to just wait, as he had missed the mark so many times here of late, that he thought the best thing to do was to just let things unravel themselves, or in other words, to not try to "cross the bridge before reaching it;" as the old adage used to go.

The day arrived. During the day the sun shone bright and warm, but as the sun went down the temperature grew warmer, the clouds became dark. Old Nimbus tried himself; the thunder reminded one much of a cloudburst; whenever it took a notion to rain at Bowser it rained. Sometimes all business ceased. The streets looked so deserted that night that the town appeared gloomy. Jim safeguarded himself against all disappointment of carrying out the request of the letter, that he had received, by sending a machine for Susie.

Susie's mother regretted very much that

Susie had to go out in such weather, but after thinking over the matter, and as Susie had very much desired it, she permitted her to go.

At one minute of nine, while Jim, Susie, Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah were assembled about a bowl of water, Jim, with envelope in hand, wondering what to do next, and constantly referring to the letter for directions, an automobile rolled up bringing the Unknown, who still was decked with a red bandana about his neck, he stepped up and was admitted. He smilingly remarked, "Just in time, we will drop the letter in water and in a minute we will have its contents."

The crowd stood there with anxious eyes. The letter was emerged beneath the water. At first it appeared milk white, then a tint began to cover it, it turned yellow, then the words in every line stood forth in bold relief.

The Unknown raised it up and held it before the lamp, and after it dried, together they read:

CHAPTER XXI.

A MOTHER AND UNCLE FOUND—THE STORY OF A FATHER.

85 Loubet Ave.,

PARIS, FRANCE, *March 30th.*

Dear Jim:—Ten days ago you read a letter at the tomb of your father, who twenty years ago was cut down in the flower of manhood. In order to relieve your mind, I will give you his name, which was Theo. Unoman. The name was a little hard for many people to pronounce, so he was generally called "The Unknown Man."

For a long time we lived in New Orleans, but when the yellow fever broke out there, we fled to Bowser. We had both contracted the fever, however, and when we reached Bowser it had developed. He took the black vomit, and when he took that we lost all hope. He also knew that his death was certain; he called the doctor and nurses about him and said: "I am going to die, but I beg a favor of you. Promise me that you will grant it." They all prom-

ised with tears in their eyes. Said he, "If my wife revives (and I have a presentiment that she will, and if she gives girth to a certain child), if it is a girl, name her Mary, for she shall be the mother of a great man, but if it is a boy child, he shall not be named. He shall be turned loose upon the chilly world of charity, but I want my brother to watch over him by helping him to help himself. Try him for twenty years, and if he proves worthy, let him stand upon my tomb and receive five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) and which amount shall be banked at once. This money is not to be paid in the presence of his mother, whom I hope at that time and on that day shall be at my father's home in France. Other conditions are: If this boy proves worthy, he shall be given fifty thousand dollars upon his twenty-first birthday. On that day he is to be married, I hope, and if Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah are alive (for at the door of Aunt Jane when he is a day old, he must be left). As they have courted so long, if they are married, or will get married, also give ten thousand dollars to them. Hoping that you will bear in

mind that I want this boy to name himself, or some one else to name him, as I want all identity hidden from him as to the wealth and ancestry of the family. If he doesn't bear my name it hardly matters, for I have always been called 'The Unknown Man.' Like Moses, he is to be a leader, like John the Baptist, he is from God; then he must come up in a new atmosphere."

Your father ended his speech, fell back in his bed and died. I recovered from the fever. No one knew at Bowser except the Doctor that it was fever we had; therefore, to allay the fear and prevent the spread of disease, the house was quarantined and the body of your father, my husband, was taken out in the garden and placed beneath the sod. As soon as I was well we left by night. You were born and Aunt Jane can tell the rest. The grave naturally would have aroused suspicion, but we bought the lot and suggested the idea that we would make it a park and raise a monument to the Captain Theo. Unoman, for fear that someone might suspect the grave we placed on it, "In honor or to commemorate the memory of one of daring deeds."

To watch over it we placed in the house D. S. Unoman, who was to see no one, but to stay in the house by night and day. Live to himself, and when he went for the purchase of food to get it from neighboring towns and never meet anyone or be seen. Consequently, for a long time the people got the idea that the house was haunted and the news was generally whispered that an unknown man was seen about the place.

One night a great storm came, the house was blown down and torn away and hence, the aim of the donors was consummated. A stranger to the Bowserians was in the city at the time and suggested the monument and the money came in a way that no one has ever been able to tell.

The people forgot about the unknown man, but Jim, I am glad to tell you that this man always kept his eyes on you, and tonight, as you read this letter, remember that it is from the dearest one you have in the world. The Unknown Man will also give you a verbal message for me which I want you to carry out to the letter.

Your loving mother,

THERESA UNOMAN.

"Now," said Unoman, "I have a special message for you. I have finished; now, let me say, my work that I had to do. I promised your mother to look over you in a way, and to prevent any destruction or mishaps that might befall you. This I have done. This year my contract closes. I was to guard you for twenty years, and present the letters I delivered, after which my responsibility ended. I leave this year to join the ex-President's envoy for Africa, and I know not when I will return. I have a presentiment that I never will; nevertheless, it is my heart's desire to go there, and if I should depart this life, like Cox, the missionary, 'let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.'

"Now I am instructed to inform you that on June 1 of next year, that your mother will arrive in New York on the Lusitania; you, Aunt Jane—"

"What!" responded Jim. "My mother alive and will be in New York."

"Yes," said Unoman, "She is alive and will meet you in New York."

"Ah!" shouted Jim, "Is it possible? My

mother lives. Thank God that she lives, and she will meet me in New York?"

"Yes," said Unoman. "She lives, and let us pray that she has been kept secure from harm, that He will continue to keep her. Dear Jim, she loves you, but she was trying to carry out your father's last request. You know not the heartaches, the pain, the sorrows, that must have come to her in order to carry out his request, but so far to the letter, she has lived up to it. Will you meet her?"

"Meet her?" said Jim. "My soul goes out to her tonight. My spirit will stand on Laubet Avenue, in Paris, and commune with her. She will know that it is her son and my sleep will be sweet as never before, for today I have two mothers, who, with their heart, shall call me 'My son.'"

"Now," said the Unknown, "you will meet her, but will you know her?"

"My mother?" said Jim. "I would know her ashes, if I should ever chance to get within view of that form. I will feel her presence! I will know her voice, for instinct itself will tell me that is my mother. Oh, I wonder how will

I feel, no tongue can express it, no pen can write it, or painter describe how a poor boy for twenty years, has drifted on the waves of time all alone, gazing, ever gazing at the human barks that passed, searching, praying, looking and hoping to find his mother. I never once felt that she was dead, but what my feelings were I know not. But, oh! to know that she lives, to look into her eyes and search for some likeness, some peculiarity that proves that that blood is blood of my blood, and bone of my bone; like Adam beholding Eve, my soul will be filled with ecstasy.

"You will do this," said Unoman. "Take this bandana and wave it at the ship as it arrives, and a lady will return the compliment with a red parasol, and upon landing, she will walk with the same in her left hand. By this you will know that such a one is your mother. Take this one and preserve and keep it until that day." Saying this, Unoman gave Jim the red bandana that was about his neck, and at the same time he pulled another from his pocket.

Jim took it and said, "I thank you from the

depth of my heart. You have planted a seed of love in my heart for you that will ever remain. Like the mighty palm, it will send its roots downward into an everlasting gratitude, and its branches will grow and spread into a thousand branches of friendship, bearing the fruit of reciprocity on every bud that shall stud the branches."

"Young man, give me your hand!" said Unoman. "You are a noble man and a true Unoman, for among the sons of men, those who prove faithful to those who befriend them *are unknown*. As I behold you, I see more and more the big heart of your father, Captain Unoman, shining out in your countenance; a greater man, a more noble man, and a braver man never lived. As a man of means, no man ever came for help and went away hungry; he was a father to the needy and a succor to a hundred widows. He was a loving friend, but a fierce enemy. Along certain lines he was peculiar, but a greater Roman never lived. I noticed the other evening at the reception that your presence proved that you were a sun whose heart warmed the multitude with ardor,

and held them with as much ease as Sol does his planets and satellites about him. If there is any difference in you and your father it is the inherited character of your mother, whose voice possesses an eloquence that has the cadence of a harp and is as sweet as a melophone.

"Ah," said Jim. "Can I wait a year, a whole year, to see my mother? Nay, how can I?"

"Yes," remarked Unoman, "You must wait."

"But," ejaculated Jim, "It will look like an eternity."

"Nevertheless, promise me that you will not violate the contract, but that you will wait."

"If it was my father's will and my mother's desire, I will abide the time."

"Give me your hand."

There on the porch of the cabin, where twenty years before the baby was found, in a basket, the two stood shaking hands. The storm was past, the stars shone bright, and every anon, the birds were heard whistling on the distant hill, while the cricket chirped from the walls; together in relation were they as they had been twenty years ago. Jim was that

baby; Unoman was that man who placed the baby there. As they stood shaking hands, a tear settled in their eyes.

Unoman said, "I leave tomorrow, but a letter I will give you, which tells the rest. I want you to read it alone, and think it over soberly with prayer and meditation. He bent over and kissed the brow of Jim and said: "Watch that doctor, but be a man." In a whisper he said: "I am your uncle. Captain Unoman was my brother. Keep that, tell it not even to your best friend."

Jim reached out his hands. "Oh! My uncle! I have ever thought that not a relative had I in all the world, but, are you here tonight? Do you breathe your breath upon my brow."

Unoman, as Jim uttered these words, vanished into the dark. Jim returned into the house and in a little while, he and Susie were on their way to Susie's home. Just as they passed the bank Jim looked towards the park, and for a few minutes stood there gazing. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He said, "Susie, come with me," and upon his knees he fell.

He bowed his head against the marble and he said, "My father, dost thou sleep here?"

Susie drew back and said, "Jim, pardon me; I must go."

Jim arose and followed.

She stopped and said, "Did I understand you to say 'my father'?"

Jim bowed his head and said, "I did. Oh! Susie, I know it all; he sleeps there."

Susie drew away from him.

"Susie, don't leave me," said Jim.

"But I must," said Susie.

The clock pealed forth and Jim realized that it was 10:30 o'clock.

"Oh," said Susie. "So late."

They walked to the door and then they bade each other good-night.

CHAPTER XXII.

FILLING TO THE FULL.

While all these things were transpiring at Bowser, the preacher was under the treatment of Doctor Jones and the care of tender hands who gathered about the doctor's home. The doctor, knowing as he did, that the disease was brought on by excitement, worry and care, arranged a place at his home, for he knew that another such night at the minister's home might mean death to the patient. For days the Rev. Slackam was a sick man. Sometimes delirious; sometimes he did not know those about him, but always very sick. One day he sat up in his bed and made a confession. Said he: "It's all over now. Last night I had a dream. I thought that conference was in session. I saw the men appointed, and saw another take my church. I wanted it, I contended for it, but it was gone; I saw my enemies crowd upon me, a petition was offered against me; there was no hope for me. The man who led the crowd I could not see so well, but finally I saw

a young man walk through the crowd and seized the leader and brought him to me; this man held the paper of my removal. I looked into their faces; the man who fought me was Doc, and the young man who captured and brought him to me and exposed his plot was the young man I have hated without a cause. It was Jim." The preacher stopped talking, burst into tears and said, as he fell back into the bed: "It's all over, I will soon be gone."

The people said different things about him. Some said he had lost his mind. Others said he had resigned the church—he has given up hope—I can't see how his hair got white—somebody has thrown a hand at him, others said. But the doctor said he would soon be all right.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHANGE IN LOVE AFFAIRS.

As the days rolled by to the surprise of the community, the hand the doctor was playing with Susie was really marvelous. He and Susie were seen out together riding several times. All the young people began whispering about the matter; the girl in pink became angry. The preacher, as he heard more and more about it, gained strength and all the young women were intensely proud of it, for they said: "If the doctor gets her, it will give some one else a chance for Jim."

Jim did not call upon any of the other girls only in a cordial way, but the treatment received by him from Susie made him feel serious. Jim had not told Susie of the five thousand dollar (\$5,000.00) gift, but it had been whispered around among a few of the banker's friends, and one day at dinner it dropped into the ear of a certain cook who spared no pains to circulate it, and while Susie had not heard of it, yet she had heard some

mysterious things and had seen some that seemed to puzzle her very much. In a general way, some of the girls whispered, "He is as rich as Jay Gould, and as learned as old Socrates."

One day Jim received a letter from Susie that read as follows:

BOWSER, GA., *July 25th.*

Dear Mr. Johnson:—

This will inform you that I have yours to hand and contents duly noted. Sorry that I can't accept your invitation for a ride to the picnic on Lake Jackson, as I am otherwise engaged. Hope that you are well and still succeeding. We are all well. Say, I am glad to inform you that the bit of news you kept from me as to the team; I have heard all about it. They have falsely tried to lay it on Dr. Jones, but it is not so. I spoke to him about it and he denies it emphatically. I know that it is not he for he swears to me upon the honor of his dignity that not a word of it is true, and that you are the best friend he has in the world.

You know Jim, the doctor is so good, and I know he would not tell a story.

Your old schoolmate,

SUSIE SMITH.

P. S.—The doctor and I are going fishing next week. Come and go with us. You and Elder Slackam might get a buggy and go along. By that time he will be up I am sure.

When Jim received the letter and after learning the contents, he threw it to the floor and stamped on it. Said he: "I hate it, for I may not be able to fulfill certain desires of my mother, if things keep on at the rate they are going." Jim did not go over to Susie's, but wrote her as follows:

BOWSER, GA., *July 26th.*

Dear Little Girl:—

I did not know that I loved you till that last letter of yours reached me. But now I find myself insanelly in love with you. My poetry was but a sensual poet's dream. The thought that splutters, or I might say, that bubbles

from my heart, but now I have been able to reason out my way in life, and as I reach the point, more and more I dream, only, dear Susie, of thee. May I add that there is one over the sea who is my guardian and star of hope in this life, and an inspiration of the life beyond. It is her request that my partner be just such a one as you. Now tell me, dear Susie, that you love me, say you love me and my life becomes one big effulgent ray of the great Divine. Say no, and my soul loses its brilliancy and heat and like an incandescent lamp whose fuse is gone, it becomes illuminous; yea, it is dead.

Yours sincerely,

JIM.

When Susie received Jim's letter, she spread it out beside the doctor's. She said, "For my soul, I can't tell which I love. Yes; I can, I love Dr. Jones. Once I loved Jim; once my highest ambition was to be his wife, and beside him all men looked vain, as nothing; but since the night at the monument he has shattered my love. He no more gives me the feel-

in his presence I used to have. To me now he seems a serpent from whose presence I draw away, and from whose touch I would flee; yet he would continue to seek after me, draw me to him, haunt me; yea, conjure me, but how can I love him. A Negro loving such a man, a white man. My nature rises in revolt; it is unthinkable. Now Doctor Jones, I do not love, but he is so good and mother serves him as a god, and may not I, after all, let her choose for me, and if for no other reason than for mother's sake."

One evening, long after the picnic trip, while Susie was alone meditating about her lover, a knock was heard at the door. It was Jim. She received him, but instead of addressing "Jim," as usual, in all her talk it was "Mr. Johnson." In coldness she fairly breathed frost upon him, but this, instead of driving him away, only made him love her more intensely. With tears in his eyes he pleaded for her love, for a kind consideration, for just a promise to become his wife when he graduated, but to every request she said "No."

One time he drew near her to place his hand



"MY NATURE RISES IN REVOLT; ITS UNTHINKABLE".—
Said Susie.

upon her hand, and she bounded back as though he was a snail. He asked to be allowed to come around to take her to church, but this request was refused by finding some excuse.

The doctor was often seen out with her and one time the preacher; however, she was only out with the preacher once. For as the boys were passing her and as they looked at the preacher's grey hair they said, "Grandpa must be taking his little girl out for a walk." The doctor heard about it and teased her more. The atmosphere changed and there seemed to be but four souls happy in Bowser: Aunt Jane, who had finally given Uncle Jonah a promise to marry him one month after Jim's graduation, and the others were Susie and Doctor Jones. Susie could not move for the doctor, and the doctor seemed to have been her counterpart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

One evening Uncle Jonah was down to Aunt Jane's, and he said, "Janie, I never seed anything so much like myself in my life. I noticed dat gal Susan was once crazy about Jim, and now she seems to forget all 'bouten him."

"Yes," said Aunt Jane. "He is stirred all over about it, too. Sometimes he can't hardly eat. For twenty years I have known him, but I have never seen him so fretted. He is a pining away like an old rooster I once had on de yard when he was left without a hen."

"Well," said Uncle Jonah, "I was piddling around de yard over to the doctor's the other day, and I hearn such a laughing, I keeps one year open and I hears him say to Susie: 'Do you 'spect to be my wife?' She says: 'I will think about it. My mother told you yes, but I will think 'bouten it.' The doctor says: 'You will say yes, but you won't, casin you gwinter marry Jim.' Then what you reckon she says. She say: 'I wouldn't marry Jim if he was the

last man in the world. I used to love him, but sumpin' has driven it away, jist like he is pizen.' I sorter felt bad 'cose I know how like a dry pear with all the juice gone, how for fifty years my heart's been, and now, in the last month since you says you will marry me next June, I feel like a kittle with syrup juice biling over."

* * * * *

Jim walked up and as he was approaching he heard the name of Susan, so he paused on the outside. He could not catch it all, but he heard the word pizen when he walked in. Uncle Jonah changed the conversation and said, "Yes, Janie, I think dat preacher was sho' pizen, for his hair is white as er lock er cotton and he looks ole un I do. I notice one thing: he kin preach better dan he use ter—everybody says it. Dat doctor don't seem to come outen sick er lot, and Susan don't sing in de choir nigh so much. She seems ter be wonderin' 'bouten sumpun."

It was now just six thirty o'clock, but like all summer days, the sun seemed to hang around the hills till almost seven. Jim went as usual

to pay his evening visit to his father's grave. When he was returning home, to his surprise as well as joy, he saw Susie coming up Lemon Street. When he met her he tipped his hat and paused to greet her, and even ventured to go home with her, but she drew away from him and said: "Mr. Johnson, you will have to pardon me if I refuse."

Like an old man whose feet were heavy with years, he blundered or dragged his way home. He said, "Many people say that money brings joy, but with five thousand dollars in the bank, and the promise of fifty thousand more, it is not so. My days fly like a weaver's beam and my soul seems to have dry rot."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DISCOVERY OF SELF.

The falling leaves and the dying grass painted by the grim hue of an Autumn sun brought to mind the fact that school was near.

A line or two from Paris bore evidence of a loving mother beyond the sea, but there was some unknown affinity in Bowser that had eclipsed the love that he had for the one across the sea. One day he received a letter bearing the stamp of an elephant. It was from Africa. It was just a line or two.

Dear Jim:—We are here. Colonel Roosevelt killed an elephant today and we shot at a lion. When he returns I think I will remain and spend the rest of my days among my people in Liberia, the Negro Republic. They may need me; at any rate, I need them. President Barclay is yet in the chair and since the visit of the envoy from America, made up of Mr. Emmett Scott, of Tuskegee, and others, and since they have adjusted that would-be-

million-dollar loan that was such a burden, the Republic is on easy street.

Yours as ever,

UNOMAN.

P. S.—Keep your eyes on that doctor, and if you ever need me, touch the cable.

Up to the day that Jim left for school his love affairs with Susie got no better. He said, "I have ever heard that marriage was a lottery, now I believe every word of it; yet I love that girl. She is a pearl of great price to me. I would give all I possess and then work a thousand years if I lived that long, if she would just consent to be my wife."

Early one morning the train left Bowser and a lone passenger in the colored coach gazed out of an open window into the cold. After the rumble over hills and valleys and the change of conductors about four times, he was again in school.

On that trip he found out things about himself he never once thought before. He hated novels to a fault, but the first thing he bought and the only book he read was "The Girl I

Left Behind Me." He devoured it. The porter went through the car whistling "You Big Old Baby Doll," and Jim gave him a quarter to sing it over again. He had hardly registered and found his room before he wrote Susie a whole letter of poetry.

Susie read it and said, "What a babbler. I did not know there was such a gulf between the races.

She answered him, but so chilly were the words. She said among other things: "Mr. Johnson, for years I thought I knew you, and in those days no name was so sweet, but I have been deceived. Of course it was no fault of yours, but let me add that you have been to us an unknown man. Please don't blame me. My love for you has been warm, but in a single night the *white frost killed it*. You remember the night, that rainy night, as you knelt at the tomb. Please don't think me hard-hearted, but only consider me as a foreigner and write no more.

An old schoolmate,
SUSIE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PROBLEM HARDER THAN MATHEMATICS.

Jim took the letter and read it a dozen times and shook his head at every reading. He said: "I would kiss a buck and dance a jig if I could guess her. I would feel like a lone Hottentot on the Ganges if I understood her."

He took out his mother's letter that Unoman, his father's half brother, had given him, and read it again.

Dear Son: This will inform you that your mother yet lives. I will be in New York on the first day in June. Meet me. Have Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah come also, then together we will all attend your graduation.

Your mother,

THERESA UNOMAN.

P. S.—Your grandpa sends love.

"Well," said he. "That letter to me has been a mystery when I think for twenty years I thought that mother Jane was my mother and I was an orphan, but this letter beats any-

thing I ever saw. 'Don't write any more.' I wonder does she think I will surrender like that. This is J. J. Unoman, and I wonder does she think a Unoman gives up so easily. I will write her tonight."

The mails of the next day bore away Jim's letter and every word was a flame of love.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CHANGE OF NAME.—DR. BLYDEN.

Jim, after being in school a few days, took Unoman's letters, the request of his father and those of his mother to the College President and had a heart to heart talk.

"Ah," said the President, "That often happens."

"But," said Jim, "How am I to change my name when I have been known as Jim Johnson?"

"That is easy," said the President.

"My name is already in the catalogue."

"So it is."

"The people know me as Jim Johnson."

"Men often add a third name in school."

"I'm puzzled what to do."

"Suppose you sign it J. J. Unoman."

"That's fine, Professor," said Jim.

"The request of your father looks strange," said the President. "But I knew a Frenchman once who drew multitudes and he boasted that he hadn't combed his head for thirty years.

They are a little strange, but like the Germans, they are a great people.

Unoman, his uncle, sent him a letter from Liberia in March that read as follows:

Dear Jim:—

I find Liberia, the Colored Man's Republic, a dream, and a very pleasant dream and the highest realization of real progress. The tribes are numerous but progressive. I find that the book writers and the missionaries have always held up the dark side of the picture. They paint the African as ugly and lazy, but I find them very different. Of course they don't have to scramble for a livelihood as they do over there in America, for you know everything here grows almost spontaneously. Say, how is your little love affair? I told you to marry Susie, but now I am sorry, for I see Via girls and Madingoes that I would rather see you marry that any woman in all of America.

Never mind though, if you want to marry Susie, go ahead. Say, I never did tell you how I frightened that preacher of yours until his head got white and scared that doctor almost

to death because they were plotting against you.

I never thought once of marrying, but I have the fever bad. I may get me a Via or a Mandingo girl if I can. Women are mighty funny though.

I met the great Dr. Blyden since being here and I must admit that he is the greatest man that I ever saw. I thought that your father, Theo., was a wonder, but this man Blyden speaks forty languages. All Europe is wild about him. I hope that some day you can meet him. If it was not that you were near the finishing in your school, I would get you to come and finish in the College of Liberia.

Your uncle,

D. E. UNOMAN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SPARK THROUGH A CREVICE.

A letter was again sent to Susie, telling about the struggle of an unknown man with her lover, the doctor, and his close friend, the preacher. Susie read it and through the crevice of her soul she saw a spark, but yet the affairs of Jim were not bettered thereby.

Jim made one hundred in his studies, but with Susie his marks dropped from forty to thirty and on down to ten and then to zero. His mixed blood was puzzled; so after studying for days he thought to give the whole matter up as a big joke.

One night while on his bed peeping through the lattice of discouragement he saw the glimmer of a spark. Said he: "Susie has dropped me but I will not despair; I will try as Bruce did—once more. In the meantime I will write two letters at once. She calls me an unknown man. I will be one, indeed. I will write as Unoman. Two shots at the duck from differ-

ent angles. Jim's letter I will not repeat, but you can see what Unoman wrote:

Miss Susie Smith,

Bowser, Ga.

Dear Miss:—Please pardon my boldness, but by an unknown thread of circumstances I have come to write you. Mr. J. Johnson, your friend, who is mine also, has spoken from time to time so tenderly of you and never mentions you without saying that you are the noblest woman in all the world. He has made me love you, and you know he and I are the only colored students here out of nine hundred or more. I hope I am not proving unjust to my old chum who will finish school the same day I do; but how can I refrain from saying that I love you and will marry you tomorrow, if you say yes.

Believe me to be sincere,

Your obedient slave,

J. J. UNOMAN.

When Susie received the letter she was dumfounded. She knew not what to do.

She sought the advice of her mother and her mother said that the doctor was good enough for her, but men were such cheats.

Susie got the idea, "cheat," so she wrote a line or two, then after another letter she wrote again. One letter after another and each one like a June melon, weekly grew longer.

Of course, while Jim wrote the Spencerian, J. J. Unoman wrote the vertical.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JIM FINDS OUT THAT HE IS WHITE.

One April morning when the mails reached the students, Jim was busy working on his oration. Out of the large number of graduates, he was one of the eight selected to speak. The postman gave him a letter and at a glance he saw that it was from Susie. It had been a long time since Jim had heard from her, but as Unoman got a line every now and then, he was not so badly disturbed in mind. This letter apparently woke him up. However, he read:

Dear Mr. Johnson:—

Pardon my folly, if you so construe it, but today I am returning in a separate package all of your letters. Please do me the kindness to return mine or destroy them. If you would inquire my motive I would simply say that I am a Negro and you are white, an Anglo-Saxon, Irish, Italian, or Spaniard or Swede, I

know not and care less. It is enough for me to know that you are white.

And no Negro woman desires inter-marriage of any kind, legal or illegal, with a white man. To the women of my race, such a thought is odious. I know you have written that we might go to Europe, but believe me, I would not marry a white man if he were as rich as Croesus or the King of ten Empires. I prefer rather to marry a poor ditch-digger with a single shirt to his back. In this epistle I voice the sentiment of the women of ten million of sable sons and daughters living in America. Like the many other white men of your race, you are my enemy, and I am yours.

SUSIE SMITH.

Jim turned as red as a beet and got up and walked the floor for an hour. He said to himself, "I am white? It is an infamous lie! If I thought so I am deceived. I have a work to do. God has especially raised me up to do. My father has endowed me with money for it. I can hardly get out of school soon enough before my paper will paint the story of a down-

trodden race, that will startle the world. I white! When ten millions of my race are ground beneath the heel of the oppressor, when daily they are rushed out of the courts to the chain gang without a scintilla of evidence. I, white! When for twenty years I have cried my eyes red when every week the papers tell the story of a black man hanged to a tree and his body riddled with bullets of a hundred rifles. Lynched, lynched, killed, murdered, assassinated, and under the dome of the State Capitol. I white, when my race needs me and within one year the rattle of my press will be heard, and daring head lines will cry to the nations of the world to help a righteous cause. Let Susie marry whom she pleases, and let me live to the age of Noah and fill a bachelor's grave, but not once, nay, never let me try to pass for white or try to leave my race. I will write to her today and settle the matter once for all. What man can better voice the sentiment of a race than a man of that race? The white man may lift his voice for and in our defense, but it requires a Moses to feel the heart pangs of an Israel. The white man may



"I WHITE, WHEN MY RACE NEEDS ME."

spend weary nights pleading our cause, but who can sing the weird songs of the wailer better than the one who is crushed beneath the heel of the oppressor? And yet, Susie thinks I am white and playing the roll of an imposter. It will be settled once forever.

CHAPTER XXX.

DOCTOR JONES NEVER SLEEPS.

When Jim returned to school, notwithstanding that he often heard from Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah, the news was limited—always the same: “We are well and hope you are the same. Study hard, be a Christian, don’t back-slide.”

In the meantime the doctor was elated over his success, but Susie was rather slow about granting his request to become his wife, so he searched the recesses of his mind to learn the reason for the delay.

One day he learned through some of the other girls that Susie had heard that Jim was white; hence, you know the rest, but she doubted it, and before making another move she had to be satisfied on that score.

In a way yet to be known, he drew her out on the question and then sought to aid her in the investigation. It was not long before he returned with the news that Jim’s mother was in Europe, that she was married; his father

was a millionaire, and to hide the scandal had given a hundred thousand dollars. That Jim would go to Europe after graduating and that he would soon forget that the Negro race existed.

Susie, blinded by prejudice of color and race, which is as prevalent on one side as the other among black and white, believed every word of what the doctor said without a single minute of investigation. Her love at once passed away and hatred came into her heart ten fold. She told her mother about it and her mother said she had always heard it.

In the meantime, the doctor pushed his claim, got Susie to return Jim his letters, and before they had gotten as far as New York he got Susie's mother to give a party and to publicly that night, declare their engagement. He wanted the date set in May, but Susie preferred September. After a long hum and haw, as Uncle Jonah afterwards put it, they settled on July 15th. The next day when he met the preacher, he said: "Reverend, the thing is fixed. Susie is mine."

The preacher, who felt that his punishment

had already been more than he could stand, and who yet peeped out the side of his eyes for the Unknown Man to return at any moment, simply bowed his head.

The town began to get ready for the event, and all the girls said that it was about what they expected. Said they: "Jim may be white, but I can't believe that ghost story. He is too kind to be anything but colored. The news managed to stay out of reach of Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane, and thus one thought Doctor Jones congratulated himself on, that "Doctor Jones never sleeps."

JIM'S LETTER AND HIS ANXIETY.

For a day after Jim received the letter of Susie's and the return of all his correspondence with her, he was like a young lion just caged. He walked the floor of his room, he pushed his hands into his pockets, he would blow, and so absorbed in this affair was he that he could hardly do anything but think of Bowser, Georgia. On the third day after he received it he managed to compose his mind, so he wrote as follows:

BOSTON, MASS., *April 20th.*

Miss Susie Smith,

Bowser, Ga.

Your very interesting letter received, and I need not tell you how interested I was to learn the facts related to me about by nativity and blood. Dear Susie, it was not just yesterday when we first met, but I have known you for years. We rambled the hills and played the creeks together, and many years ago in a play together we were crowned king and queen. Now in all these years, dear Susie, consult your memory and see if you have ever known me to be false or my actions to belie my words. You say I am white and that it is odious to think of a colored woman marrying such a man. For that statement alone you have endeared yourself ten fold to me. Susie, believe me to be not any other than a poor sable son of Africa. It is true that I am a mixed blood of French and Spanish ancestry. If you don't know it, you must know it, that it matters not if it is Negro how little of it touches any other blood, it turns it immediately to Negro. Now, if you doubt that I am a Negro, I can

prove my racial identity beyond the shadow of a doubt. Susie, Providence is so gracious and so good, praise His name; if five years, if two years ago, if eight months ago I had been called upon for this proof I would have been unable to produce the facts, but now I am fully able to meet my pursuers and destroy my enemies. If I wanted to pass for white, my hair, my color and my brogue favor it, but pray, tell me, what would I gain? If I have ever tried to take the advantage of my color for any special privilege, or under any circumstances, I don't know it. Now, Susie, I love you, but if you do deny me this, highest of my soul's crave, deny me not at least one privilege to establish the truth and to make my enemies false. Believe me to speak from my heart.

Sincerely yours,

JIM.

P. S.—Remember me to Mother Jane and Uncle Jonah.

When Susie received Jim's letter, she was entertaining a few of her girl friends. One of the girls took the letter from the postman and

saw "Boston, Mass.," on the stamp mark, so she shouted, "From Jim, I bet you a penny!" Susie's engagement was generally known and the reason for her break with Jim, therefore the girls were not at all surprised to see Susie toss it out the window without opening it. One of the girls said, "Susie, you say he is white, but I don't believe a word of it. White people act differently from Jim. I don't believe it. I believe that is a frame-up to reach certain ends, so if you don't mind it I am going to read the letter, and if you don't care, I am going to answer Jim myself for you."

Susie consented and the letter was read. As line after line was read, Susie became more and more interested, and finally she was so interested in the argument that Jim made, that she decided to write and apologize. The girls were so pleased at the turn that they shouted "Bravo! Susie, Bravo! That's right; use common sense, suspend judgment, and if he can prove his racial identity, give him a chance."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A RAY OF HOPE.

The advice of the girls had its effect on Susie and she decided to write and give Jim a chance. Her letter went through due course of mail; Jim received it, his mind was greatly relieved and he answered her immediately, stating that he would fix the date when all proof would be established. Susie began to again act chilly towards the doctor, who daily pressed his claims. Her mother felt alarmed over it and said that she could not understand her own child. Occasionally Susie sought out Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah, but never thought once to discuss with them this all-absorbing question.

The preacher went to the conference and was returned. The summer was now almost on and Bowser put on a flowery dress. Uncle Jonah occasionally reminded Aunt Jane that the time of the marriage was close at hand. Aunt Jane seemed to feel like deferring it so she finally got him to agree to put it off until

Jim graduated and settle down, which would not be earlier than August or September.

One day in May, as Uncle Jonah was calling on Aunt Jane, Aunt Jane startled him by saying, "Jonah, what you reckon, I jist got a letter from Jim wid a hundred dollars and two tickets."

"What dat, now?" said Uncle Jonah.

"Wy, dat boy wants us to go to New York."

"What you gwine do dar?"

"I don't know."

"Wy, you will git lost in New York fo' you git two blocks," said Uncle Jonah. "I heard ole master in slave times talk 'bouten how he went dar and de men picked his pockets."

"Yes, Jonah, Ise been a-prayin' over dat ting. I jist dunno how we gonna work it."

"Did Jim say he would meet us?" said Uncle Jonah.

"Yes," said Aunt Jane, "He sez he would meet us at de train."

"Well, oman, what you 'fraid of? I wuz powerful 'fraid at fust, but since he will meet us, we can jist pend on sich a boy like Jim."

CHAPTER XXXII.

UNCLE JONAH IN NEW YORK.

The day arrived and all the town of Bowser seemed to have been at the station to bid Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah goodbye. Several said, "Tell Jim that we still love him and to come as soon as he can."

"Yas," said Aunt Jane, "He sez he wants to go to Canidy and around a little after he graduate, but Ise nea'ly scared to death that this train will jump off de track."

"'Tain't gwine jump no whar," said Uncle Jonah and laughed, "Ha! Ha! Ise ride on a train second year after freedom 'clared and we killed a cow, but nobody was hurtin'."

The doctor was down but the parting seemed a litle too much for Susie. She assisted Aunt Jane in getting ready and even cooked some nice things and sent to the train, but to go down to the train, notwithstanding that the doctor had begged her to go, she refused. In her room, however, one, upon careful examination, might have discovered a tear drop. The

train departed and out of the windows gazed Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane. Every time the train blew loud or passed through a tunnel, Uncle Jonah would draw up and remark, "Janie, don't git scared; tain't gwine hurt you."

One day about six o'clock the train pulled into the Pennsylvania depot in New York. Jim was there to receive Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane. Uncle Jonah said to Jim: "Boy, why you have so much police here; looks like dar's a dozen in de station."

"Uncle Jonah," remarked Jim, "There were only three police in the station. Those other fellows you saw were porters." A cab soon hurried them over to their rooms and about three o'clock they were at the boat landing.

"Janie, you know," said Jonah, "Pears like to me that a body ud git hurt here? Say, sonny, how you reckon dey ever git de mortar up dar to build dat house? Ha! Ha! Dis is sho' New York."

Aunt Jane whispered, "Jonah, you make too much noise; you are jist like a rabbit or a parrot."

"Now, Janie, I bet de mayor of dis town dunno what possum huntin' is."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MOTHER AND SON.

Standing on the pier at New York in a single hour one can count over five hundred ferry boats, row boats, yachts, steamers, schooners, Napthas and ships pass.

The Hudson seemed one big ant nest that is worked up with living monsters that ply the deep. Turning from the river view that seems one big mirror portraying a city beneath its banks, one is impressed with the babble of all nations and kindred, who have brought their language, dress, and customs from Egypt, Turkey and Italy, China, Ireland and other countries beyond the creek and dumped them down into New York.

There are more colored people on 53rd St., in New York than the population of some whole cities down South. For one to stand on Broadway, they can see one multitude of humanity, that jostle, crowd, and press together, forming a line over three miles long, all of this was so interesting to Uncle Jonah.

As the crowd thronged the pier, the ships heaved in sight at Ellis Island. The baggage was carefully inspected. Now the passengers were eyeing New York City, everybody waving. Jim's eyes were bulging to see her, finally a red parasol was seen. Jime waved the bandana; it was answered. The woman leaning on the arm of a man about sixty-two years old, with a red parasol in her left hand, came down the gang-plank. Jim met them. No pen can paint the meeting of a mother and son on such an occasion. She said: "Jim, you look so much like Theo. Got his eyes. Father, you notice he even walks like him. This is Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane that I am so much indebted to. Have you married yet? I am so glad to see you. Say, Jim, where is she?"

"Who, mother?"

"Your wife."

"I can't imagine."

'After a few passing hours in New York the train hurried them over to Boston. The day rolled around for the close of school. Jim issued invitations to a few friends and among them, one went to Susie. The different friends

at Bowser sent little tokens of respect, but to Jim's surprise he received no reply at all from Susie. Jim, in his oration, made a great impression, just as we expected.

In a few days they were off on a trip for Buffalo and then to Niagara and Montreal. Their plan was to go to Bowser about August 1st, and launch his paper. Susie had refused, as he understood, to answer his letter, granting the day for him to establish his proof; therefore, he had given it all up and decided to let things drift. Aunt Jane and Uncle Jonah felt anxious to return to Bowser, consequently all scenery and beauty of Canada and the United States became uninteresting. Jim, to please the old people, after consulting his mother, bought their tickets and sent them home.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MOTHER STIRRED.

One day while sitting in a park in front of the Public Library in Chicago, Jim said: "Mother, I have a bit of news for you." The mother, of course, was glad to hear her son at any time, so she said: "Jimmie, I am all attention, say on."

Jim tried to relate it, but found himself unable to talk. Finding himself not able to say what he wanted, he fished the letter from his pocket that had informed him so much about himself and future plans. As she took the letter and read it, all her French and Spanish blood mixed with hot African blood boiled. She said: "Jimmie, it's an enemy, but I can vindicate you; as far back as I know my people are Creoles and your grandfather will tell you that, while he is a bright Creole, yet his wife and your father's mother was as dark as Aunt Jane.

"Mother, is that so?"

"Yes; every word of it."

"Can we prove it?"

"Prove it? Why, we have never posed as anything but Negroes."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; Creoles have never tried to be anything else. Of course, we live in France and France has never had color phobia. She respects her subjects regardless of complexion. Why, one of her greatest writers was a Negro, but we only knew him as Dumas. We think not of your foolishness over there; we are too busy for it. Paris, as you may know is the hub of the world. Everything moves around it, and all fashion depends upon it. There are thousands of negro soldiers there right from the heart of Africa."

"What are we to do?" said Jim.

"What day is this?" asked his mother.

"June 20th," said Jim.

"Well, call that automobile and make the telegraph office at once."

"What are we going to do, mother?"

"We are going to cable Dimmey, in Liberia, to make it direct to Bowser," said his mother.

"Can he make it?"

"Direct it to the Secretary of State and also send one in care of Prof. Blyden; they will find him, and he will come, unless a mishap."

While the cables were being delivered to Liberia, Bowser was all a-stir over the wedding that was soon to take place. Susie called on Uncle Jonah and also on Aunt Jane, but said she regretted so much that she had not heard from Jim, and especially as he had requested her to let him do a certain thing, which, no doubt, would be worth much to the community, and especially to Jim. Aunt Jane told of her trip and said that she was positive that Jim had sent an invitation to Susie and to be certain she would ask Uncle Jonah about it. Uncle Jonah told Susie of how he had seen Jim write several letters to her; how he had mailed Jim's invitation with his own hands. All this seemed strange to Susie as to the correspondence between them, and especially when Jim and Susie were looking to hear from each other in reply to certain questions.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW A KROO BOY DELIVERED A CABLEGRAM.

Mrs. Theresa Unoman cabled to her brother-in-law requesting him to come at once. In just a few minutes it had reached Monrovia, Liberia, and both the Secretary of State and Dr. Edward W. Blyden sent messengers out in search of D. E. Unoman. It so happened that for five days Unoman had been up in the Hinterland; he had just made a visit to Kiatip-poo, a noble old African King who had been reigning for years. From there he was pushing his way out among the Mandingoes, studying their method of smelting gold and silver.

The Kroo set out for him, and using the wireless telephone to reach him; from tribe to tribe it sounded until finally he was located. Then they sounded the message back. In twenty hours, not stopping night or day, a change of Kroos had borne him in a hammock to Monrovia.

It so happened that the Steamship Orion, of the Werner Line, one of the fastest grey-

hounds of the deep, was bound for Gremany. The cable stated that we must try to make Bowser not later than August 1st.

Unoman, in the quickest manner possible, hurried on to the College of West Africa to bid the President good-bye; and also to Liberia College, where he shook hands with Dr. Blyden, and in a little while had taken his berth, and the ship set off for Europe.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE GIRL IN PINK BEFRIENDS JIM.

Is there not, after all, a something that binds men together by a kindred feeling? You think of a friend, and, notwithstanding you have not seen him for days, and he appears.

When Jim got all worked up over his letter, and the meeting of Susie, to establish his identity. While they were sending the telegram across the waters, at that very moment Uncle Jonah was given a wedding invitation of Susie and Doctor Jones, by the girl in pink that we previously read about, who played such a role at the party. She surmised by the trifle of news that Jim was kept in the dark and that the doctor had "thumbed his cards and loaded his dice." She therefore secured an invitation at the earliest moment and hurried it to Uncle Jonah, ready stamped, secured the address of Jim, and mailed it immediately.

When Jim received it he had already received the cable from Dr. Blyden stating that Unoman was now on the high seas and in a day

or two would be in Madeira; if he wanted to wire him he might reach him at Canary Islands, as the ship made but two stops before reaching South Hampton.

Jim received the letter with the invitation in it and these few words from Uncle Jonah, "Come at once, if you kin, cose you are needed sorter bad. Janie is well. She sez we kin marry in September. Susie sez she has not hearn a scratch from you in I dunno when. She has sent you several letters."

The wedding invitation was printed on linen paper with a miniature picture of Dr. Jones and Susie on the opposite corners at the top with the wording below setting forth the hour and day, July 15th.

"Ah," said Jim. "Susie hasn't heard from me, nor I from her and have been writing all the time, and she is now to be married. Yet, I have heard nothing. I see the whole plot. Where does that doctor intend to stop? I will leave tonight for Bowser."

His mother was told his intention and assented at once, but his grandfather disagreed with the plan. He suggested that they would

cable Unoman to cross from the Canary Islands by New York, and by all possible haste, try to be at Bowser by the 15th of July.

In the meantime he said: "I know the old doctor that attended your father and mother. He was present at your father's burial. He is now at Tampa. I saw his name today in the locals of the Tampa Daily Times, published in that city. It has been twenty-five years since we met, but he sent me a very sympathetic letter on the death of my son, and especially so, when we consider that he is a white man and we are colored and the prejudice of the race that exists."

"Grandpa, do you think that he will come?" asked Jim.

"If he's well enough."

"Well! We will have him by all means," said Jim's mother.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CUT THE WIRE AND STOP THE CURRENT.

When Susie's mother saw that Susie was about to toss Doctor Jones overboard again, she called the doctor into question to ascertain what might be done.

The doctor couldn't decide at once, but, said he: "We will think it over and see can we find a way out."

The mother said: "Susie, why do you act so foolish. Doctor Jones is an able man; why not marry him? There is no need to fret about Jim. Have you not heard what the doctor said he found out?"

Susie: "Mother, I can't love that doctor. I am going to give Jim a chance. If he can prove his racial identity, I would rather marry him though he had both legs cut off and no arms than to marry that great hypocrite of a doctor."

The mother shook her head, but said nothing.

The next day when she and the doctor met,

he walked up smiling: "I have it," said he, "You know Susie, as a rule, always mails her letters at that box opposite your house. Well, I have arranged with the mail carrier, and he has promised to always forget to take out any mail addressed to Jim until after the wedding or thereabouts. What do you think of the scheme?"

"Fine," said Susie's mother. "You have such an able brain. Susie is a fool, or any other girl, who would refuse the hand of a man like you. Say, but how about his letters coming to Susie?"

"We can fix that," said the doctor. "Inform the mail man that you and Susie are out so much that to send your mail to number 120 Lemon Street instead of Duval Avenue. Of course, you know, that is where I board. I will do the rest. Have no more fear. I will cut the wire and that will stop the current. I think we have it now."

"Ah, you are so noble!" remarked Susie's mother. "I wish I could call back ten years."

The reader can surmise now, why Jim never received any more mail from Susie, and why

Susie failed to get his graduating invitation and other letters.

Doctor Jones not only led the town of Bowser in society, but kept posted on all lines. He allayed the fear of the preacher by informing him on good authority that the Unknown Man was in Africa and was there to stay. "He," said the Doctor, "Has pilfered us out of our cash, old beat! He is a fake! But I have achieved my victory without him."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PREPARATION.

As the days rolled by all preparations were made for the wedding. The doctor wanted a house wedding, but Susie preferred a simple church wedding, with as little red tape as possible.

She selected her dress and her bridesmaids and flower girls, who busied themselves getting their dresses made.

The doctor ordered a long black suit from Sears, Roebuck & Co., of Chicago, and even the preacher had to get him a new suit.

The day arrived, July 15th. The wedding was to take place at night. The night before Susie had cried most of the night, and once hit on the plan of running away to keep from marrying the doctor.

Bowser was one of those peculiarly located towns as is found in many of the states. The postoffice was Bowser, Georgia, but the town straddled the line of Georgia and South Carolina. The church, by location, was in South

Carolina. Susie lived over the line and was in South Carolina, while the doctor, living but two blocks away, lived in Georgia. In that particular town, those who lived in Georgia had to secure a license to marry. Those who lived over the line might have the preacher or notary marry them and then write the license afterward.

The doctor trusted no mistakes, so he secured his papers for the marriage. Elder Slackam was selected to tie the knot.

The day was beautiful; it was a typical July day, the atmosphere was clear and sultry, and flowers perfumed everywhere. Every laudau, buggy, automobile and carriage was employed for the occasion. The trains coming in at seven-thirty brought crowds from neighboring towns, for Doctor Jones was marrying the belle of the town, and besides, he was well known and had issued one thousand invitations. Said he: "I want to show the folks at Bowser what society is, and the way we do at my home."

"Some of the people said: 'That old doctor is as proud as a peacock. He is a humbug. I hate to think about him.'"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WEDDING.—THE CLOUD LIKE A MAN'S HAND BECOMES A MIGHTY STORM.

At 7:30 o'clock that night, people were crowded all about the church windows, and when the train arrived the crowd was greatly increased. The marriage was fixed at 8 p. m.

At 7:55 p. m., among the many automobiles that rolled up, a big red Winston Six stood among the trees. The big electric lights seemed very attractive. A large number of people filled every available space in the church except the aisles, which, under the new law for public buildings, had to be kept open. Two seats in the main building had been arranged for whites. These were separated with a cord of white ribbon that showed to what extent the Jim Crow law of the South was being carried.

As the preacher reached the side door the music started. His white hair against his smooth oiled skin and black broadcloth made him look like some old rich philosopher. His step was steady, his appearance saintly. He

held a little black book that contained a golden streamer a foot long, that separated between the leaves of the ceremony. He walked to the altar.

The flower girls came in, all arrayed in white, and as the flowers dropped from their hands, they looked like one big lily shedding its leaves.

The next was a little tot dressed like Cupid, carrying a bow and arrow, a gold ring hung on the spear thereof, and its glitter was only eclipsed by the two golden wings of Cupid that stood out about two feet as though every minute he was fixing to fly.

The groom came in the side door that opened for the preacher. His dress was faultless. One woman remarked: "It fits him like the paper on the wall." Another said: "He looks like a duke." Still another said: "He looks more like a coachman."

The bridesmaid entered, then the best man came down the aisle with Susie leaning on his arm.

Under a big rainbow decorated with flowers and ferns and lighted with little electric bulbs

of different colors so finished with paper of a different shade, that when it was lighted, it presented the variegated colors of a thousand hues.

The bride and groom stood under the rainbow. Just as the bride passed in, the crowd pushed in behind. A tall old white man, wearing glasses, about seventy years old, walking by the side of a corpulent man cleanly shaven and about sixty years old, came in. Behind them a young white fellow with long red mustache and whose hair was red, and much resembled in cut the pictures that we sometimes see of Shakespeare, entered. A little white woman wearing a long veil, and who possibly would not weigh more than a hundred pounds. She was leaning on the arm of the young man. Like the bride and groom, their attire was faultless. They took the seats reserved for whites with the Jim Crow ribbon decoration thereon.

Uncle Jonah and Aunt Jane, getting in late, were puzzled to find a seat. The sexton, seeing one of these reserved seats yet unoccupied, led the grand old couple up and gave it to

them, and did in church what those in authority often do in railroad cars and stations—violated the law.

Over in the corner a big dark fellow with two other men, carrying extra large bouquets of jessamine vines and roses, had found seats. As the wedding progressed; it was the all absorbing one thing; the people heard nor saw nothing else.

When the minister reached that passage: "Has any one any objection that these two people ought not to be joined together, if so let him now speak or else forever hereafter hold his peace."

A voice from three different parts of the house cried: "I object." The sound was thunderous.

The minister stopped reading; the people looked around and so excited seemed the audience that it looked like a dozen people objecting at the same time.

The bride caught the voice, she knew, of one, and raised her veil and with her piercing eyes was searching the house. The groom had

turned and was looking in every direction, as were also all the actors.

One of the persons who objected was the judge who issued the license. He was in the gallery. He walked down the aisle, and as he approached the altar he said. "Don't be alarmed, I simply came as a witness, and as this is the place under the law that it will be of value, I come at this opportune time."

Uncle Jonah, hearing so many objections, walked out and as he approached the altar, he said: "My 'jection is dat you, Doctor Jones, force a gal to marry you by 'triving to keep her letters from reaching de man she loves and in doin' root work, you 'stand me?"

Doctor Jones said: "I don't know what you are talking about, old man. This girl has never desired to marry any man in the world but me. What letters?"

The judge said: "I can't well be a witness and judge both, so I will ask the entire audience to judge these statements and the minister might be the jury, and if he thinks that the objections are not reasonable, he can continue with the ceremony."

Another minister, who was sitting in the pulpit said: "That's fair, let us have it quiet!"

The old fat man, who was none other than Jim's grandfather, walked out and at the same time said: "I understand that Jim was to marry this lady and that a certain minister and doctor circulated the news that Jim was white, and that they prejudiced the mind of the girl against the young man and stole her heart. I am the grandfather of Jim, and while I am bright, I am not white, I am only a Creole. My wife was black. I had two sons: Theo., who was very fair, and Dimmy, who took after his mother and was very dark. I am a French General and my son Theo. was more particularly known as Captain Theo. Unoman. He died in this town twenty-one years ago."

The preacher trembled. The doctor in a cool and deliberate voice, said: "General, where is your proof?"

The old man turned around and said: "Doctor Blair."

The old man on the front seat walked out.

"Do you know me?"

"I do," said Doctor Blair.

"Give the facts."

Doctor Blair: "Before I begin, I want all the folks who are here that remember me when I was in business in this town to stand."

A dozen or more stood.

"All right; I am known. I will say I attended Captain Unoman and wife, was present at his death, and was also present when Jim was born. I heard the father's will and saw Dimmy leave with the child. Saw him many times afterward and inquired after the family. Judge, do you remember?"

The Judge stepped forward and said: "I do. I executed the will. I know Jim. We all know that he is a Negro and one of which we are proud, and if he keeps on, the world will be proud of him, for such men like him are Unknown."

Then Susie's mother walked out and shook her head: "Well," said she, "What all this got to do wid de weddin'?"

As the different witnesses testified Susie's face sparkled with joy and tears ran down her cheek. The minister stood there like a monument.



“I’ AM JIM DOCTOR JONES,---STILL WITH MY RACE.”

A rustle was heard in the amen corner of the church and a big chunky dark fellow with a red bandana about his neck and with a jug in each hand, walked out, making his way to the altar. It was the Unknown Man. As he approached the altar the doctor felt for his hip pocket, but Susie caught the hand. The doctor grew ashy and fell back on the altar. The preacher caught the eye of the man, saw the jugs and red bandana about his neck. He dropped his book, threw his hands to his head and fell to the floor. By that time, a little Mulatto woman, whom some thought was white, said: "I am Jim's mother; he is not white!"

Then the young white man pushed from his seat and as he did so the white separation ribbon broke. He pulled the red mustache from his lip and the Shakespeare wig from his head and tossed them to the floor, and at the same time saying: "I am Jim! Doctor Jones, do you know me? I am not white nor gone to Europe—still with my race."

Susie saw him. She leaped to Jim and threw her arms about his neck and shouted: "Oh! Jim, are you here? Do my eyes behold

you? You look like King Solomon! I love you! I adore you! —" Then her words were only tears, every drop of which said: "Love! Love! Love!"

* * * * * * *

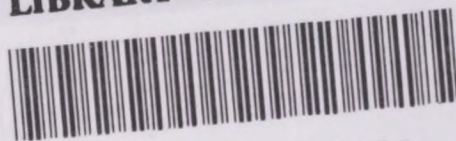
Jim had his arms about her. The mother of Susie fell in the doctor's arms and Uncle Jonah threw his arms around Aunt Jane. The girl in pink ran over to where the preacher was, picked up his book and as she did so she said: "It was no fault of yours." The preacher stood up and she put her arms about his neck. The judge winked as he looked at Doctor Blair and said: "It looks like four couples."

Then Uncle Jonah said: "Marry us all, Judge."

That night Jim proved his racial identity, took for his wife Susie, his love, and four couples were married at Bowser, and instead of the preacher officiating, the Judge performed the ceremony.

THE END.

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